

James Kay Felker papers

Ms. Coll.1272

Finding aid prepared by Clémence Scouten.

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 April 24

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Felker, James Kay, 1922-1988
Title	James Kay Felker papers
Call number	Ms. Coll.1272
Date [inclusive]	1910-1972
Extent	0.8 linear foot (2 boxes and 1 oversized folder)
Language	English
Abstract	This is a collection of materials from the life of James Kay Felker (1922-1998) providing insight into the thoughts of a young man in the United States Navy during World War II and supplemented by extensive documentation between these two parties. A fair amount of Felker's personal life is captured here as well, through general correspondence, educational information, family photographs and general ephemera.

Cite as:

James Kay Felker papers, 1910-1972, Ms. Coll. 1272, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

James Kay Felker was born on December 19, 1922, in Cairo, Illinois, the son of Henry Adam Felker (1893-1970) and Olga Fay Snider (1897-1952). James's parents, both natives of Illinois, married about 1914. James had an older brother, Jean H. Felker, who was born about 1919, also in Illinois. Henry Felker primarily worked for the railroads; however, he and his wife Fay opened a restaurant, which helped the family get through the Depression.

James Kay Felker, who appears to have been called Kay, graduated in 1941 from Kirkwood High School, in Kirkwood, Missouri. While in high school he was active as vice-president (1941), played football (1940-1941), and participated in wrestling (1938-1941). After high school, he attended college and graduated from Washington University in St. Louis. His studies there were interrupted by the war and he completed his degree after it was over.

During World War II, James Felker served in the United States Navy on the *U.S.S. Andromeda*. After his release to inactive duty, Felker served in the Naval Reserve in the 6th Naval District, the 9th Naval District and 12th Naval District. He also spent time at the Naval Air Station in Glenview, Illinois. He eventually became a lieutenant. In civilian life he worked as an administrative engineer at the Missile Engineering Division of McDonnell Aircraft.

James Felker married Louise M. Neuner and had at least three children; two sons Mark and Todd, a daughter Carolyn, and at least three grandchildren.

Felker died in 1998; and he and his parents are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Kirkwood.

Scope and Contents

This collection is composed of three series: Education, Family and Military. The first series consists of the documents – mostly issued by the various schools – relating to James Felker's education from grade school through his graduation from Washington University. There is correspondence to and from Washington University, dated from 1941 to 1957, dealing with his application to the school to study mechanical engineering, changing to liberal arts, interruption of the war in his studies, going back to school after the war, having failing grades, then finally pulling his grades up to continue. There is also one letter from Washington University from 1957 welcoming Felker to teach psychology at the university. At this point, Felker was working as an administrative engineer in the Missile Engineering Division of McDonnell Aircraft Corporation.

The next series is related to family materials, including correspondence, photographs, automobile records, genealogical information, souvenirs and personal writings. The correspondence includes letters to and from his parents, his grandmother, and his brother. The letters include one from a single woman named "Mary," who has decided she will meet with Felker "once" as he is a married man and only looking for a "good time." There is also a group of letters that deals with the death of James Felker's uncle, Howard Snider, who died in a fire at age 20 in 1914. There is a disbound scrapbook of family photographs showing James and Jean Felker, his parents, his grandparents and the family dog. This series also includes what is likely Felker's personal writings, both the diary he kept while at sea in the Navy as well as other writings documenting real and fictional sexual encounters. Many of these items are typed and do not include his name. The diary recounts Felker's time spent on the *U.S.S. Andromeda*, from April 29, 1945, until he was transferred to the United States Naval Hospital (USNH) at Treasure Island where he was hospitalized for an operation. After his hospital stay, he had temporary duty with COM 12 in San Francisco, before being granted an extended leave of 26 days starting on January 22, 1946, to go home and recuperate. After his leave was over, he was assigned to USS ATR 83, which was towing a ship from

the west coast to the east coast via the Panama Canal along with some other ships in a convoy. Then he was assigned to Great Lakes, Michigan where he requested transfer to St. Louis. He served the remainder of his military service in St. Louis before he separated from the military on August 30, 1946.

The last series focuses on Felker's time in the military and includes a comprehensive grouping of documents and correspondence to and from the Navy as well as photographs taken by Felker while on the *U.S.S. Andromeda*. The official military correspondence originates from various duty officers, from the Veterans Administration and Naval Reserves. These letters deal with dividend payments, promotion to Lieutenant, notification of Ready Reserve, physical examinations, various orders, and other military related matters. The photographs include images of the ship at dock, at the Mitsubishi Shipyards, of Nagasaki, Japan (September 1945), other photographs of the city of Nagasaki and the destruction that can be seen from the port, at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (April 1945), at Seattle's harbor (November 1945), at Ballard Shipyards in Washington (November 1945), and of small boats that were in the convoy, etc. Researchers may wish to consult Box 1 Folder 11, which includes the diary he kept at sea during his service in the Navy as well as Box 1, Folders 9 and 10, which include personal correspondence from the time he was serving in World War II.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

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Source of Acquisition

Sold by Michael Brown Rare Books, 2016.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

At Southern Illinois University Carbondale:
Howard Snider papers, 1910-1914, ID: 1/6/MSS 363

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- United States. Navy.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Diaries
- Family papers
- Military records
- Photographs
- School records

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Felker, James Kay, 1922-1988

SUBJECT(S)

- Education
- Families
- Military
- World War, 1939-1945

Collection Inventory

I. EDUCATION, 1933-1950.

	Box	Folder
Kirkwood public schools, Kirkwood, Missouri, records, 1933-1941.	1	1
Midshipmen's school, Northwestern University, Chicago, oath, regulations, and graduation program, 1944.	1	2
Southeast Missouri State Teacher's College, course cards and transcript, 1943-1944.	1	3
Washington University in St. Louis school records, 1941-1957.	1	4

II. FAMILY, 1913-1974.

	Box	Folder
Clippings, newspaper and magazine, 1914-1974.	1	5
Felker family records and ephemera, 1913-1966.	1	6
Felker genealogy, 1966.	1	7
Felker, James K., car and car service records, 1953-1959.	1	8
Felker, James K., general correspondence to and from family and others,	1	9

1938-1968.

Felker, James K., letters to his parents and grandparents, 1934-1947 (Bulk, 1942-1947) . 1 10

Felker, James K., personal writings, including diary written during his service in World War II (many unsigned), 1940-1945. 1 11

Photographs - disbound scrapbook, circa 1929-1945. 1 12

Photographs - Felker family (largely Kay and Jean Felker), 1920s-1970s. 2 1

Photographs - Snider family and unlabeled, 1892-1960 (Bulk, 1920-1940) . 2 2

Box Folder

Plans for a new restaurant, pencil sketch, 1936. 106 1

Box Folder

Snider family correspondence, letters of condolence regarding the death of Howard Snider, Felker's uncle, 1914. 2 3

III. MILITARY (SEE ALSO: BOX 1, FOLDERS 9-11), 1942-1956.

Box Folder

Felker, James K., letters from the Navy and related organizations, 1942-1952. 2 4

Felker, James K., letters to the Navy and related organizations, 1942-1947. 2 5

Military records, orders, vouchers and reports, 1942-1956. 2 6

Photographs from James Felker's time in the Navy, 1945. 2 7