

Collection #  
M1521

**COONS AND RICHMAN FAMILY  
COLLECTION, 1941-1948**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Series Contents	4

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August 2023

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 1 half size manuscript box, 1 folder of photographs

COLLECTION DATES: 1941-1948

PROVENANCE: Gift of Dr. Philip M. Coons, Indianapolis, IN

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: *Letters Home: from a World War II "Black Panther" Artilleryman*, D769.3 66<sup>th</sup>.C66 2012

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2022.0149

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Harold M. Coons (July 31, 1911-September 11, 1999) was born in Brown Township, Montgomery County, Indiana to Merle Fuson Coons and Clara Brewer Coons. Coons graduated from Wabash College in 1933 and then attended law school at Indiana University. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and retired with the rank of Major in the Army Reserves. Coons was an attorney and also served as Floyd County Superior Court Judge in 1978 and was active in the Republican Party at the county, state, and national levels. Coons married Margaret Richman on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1938 in Indianapolis, Indiana. The couple had two children, Stephen and Philip.

Margaret Richman Coons (November 13, 1913-February 3, 1998) was born in Columbus, Indiana, the daughter of Judge Frank Richman and Edith Rogers Richman. Margaret had an older brother, Philip, and two younger sisters, Frances and Elizabeth. Margaret graduated from Indiana University in 1935, where she was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority.

Judge Frank N. Richman (July 1, 1881-April 28, 1956) was born in Columbus, Indiana to Dr. and Mrs. S. T. Richman. Richman was a graduate of Lake Forest College and the University of Chicago Law School. In 1908, Richman began practicing law at his uncle, Charles S. Baker's firm in Columbus, Indiana until 1941, when he was elected as a judge on the Indiana Supreme Court. After retiring from the Supreme Court, Richman was appointed a professor of law at Indiana University. He was teaching there when the offer came through to serve as judge on the American Tribunal IV trying war crimes in Nuremberg, Germany in 1947. Upon his return from abroad, Richman continued at Indiana University until his retirement in 1952. In Columbus, he was involved with the Columbus chapter of the American Red Cross and the Columbus Foundation for Youth.

Edith Rogers Richman (February 24, 1885-August 20, 1968) was born in Ottumwa, Iowa to Lannes Edgar Rogers and Alice N. Rogers. She attended Lake Forest College in Illinois, the University of Colorado, and graduated from the University of Kansas. She was a member of the Delta Gamma and Kappa Kappa Kappa sororities. She married Frank Richman on December 24, 1908 and the couple settled in Columbus, Indiana. They had four children, Philip, Margaret, Frances, and Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Richman Heflin Bisping (March 13, 1929-February 5, 2018) was the youngest daughter of Frank and Edith Richman. She graduated from Columbus High School at 16 and when her father was asked to go to Germany to serve at Nuremberg, she took a semester's leave of absence from college at Indiana University to travel there with her parents. In 1950, Elizabeth graduated from Indiana University and married John Heflin in August of that year. The couple had three sons, Tim, Bruce, and Matt. Elizabeth earned a Master's degree in Education from California State University, Los Angeles in 1966, and she worked as a teacher and later as a school psychologist until her retirement in 2009.

Sources:

"Harold M. Coons Clarksville." *The Republic*. September 14, 1999, Page 9.

“Columbus Native Margaret R. Coons Clarksville.” *The Republic*. February 5, 1998, Page 9.

“Frank Richman Dies, Funeral Here Tuesday.” *The Columbus Herald*. May 4, 1956, Page 5.

“Mrs. Edith Richman, Judge’s Widow, Dies.” *The Indianapolis Star*. August 21, 1968, Page 19.

“Elizabeth Richman Heflin Bisping.” *The Republic*. February 11, 2018, Page 7.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains correspondence, a diary, two journals, and photographs. The first series contains letters and a diary written by Harold Coons and letters written by his wife, Margaret Coons (Richman). Coons writes letters to Margaret from the time that he is in basic training at Ft. Bragg, further training at Camp Rucker (Alabama), and through his orders overseas with the 66<sup>th</sup> Army Infantry Division. Coons lands in England at Camp Blandford and is shortly sent to France, making his way to Arles and then to his final orders in Paris, where he works for the Criminal Investigation Division of the military police. In his letters, Coons keeps his wife apprised of his daily activities and his location once he is sent overseas. Margaret, in turn, writes to her mother-in-law Clara to fill her in on what is happening with their family, particularly with Harold. Coons' son, Philip, has edited and compiled these letters into a book, published in 2012, called *Letters Home: from a World War II "Black Panther" Artilleryman*.

The second series contains two journals, transcripts, and photographs from Margaret Coons' parents, Judge Frank Richman and Edith Richman. One of the journals contains Judge Richman's daily commentary while he travels on the Big Dipper, Clessie Cummins' boat (powered by a Cummins diesel engine), from Madison, Indiana to Pensacola, Florida. The passengers, including Clessie and Richman's daughter Elizabeth, leave on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944 and arrive at their destination on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The other journal belongs to Edith Richman, who wrote at least a page every day from the time that Judge Richman accepted an assignment as a judge for the Nuremberg Trials to the day they arrived home in Indiana. Details in the journal include mentions of the damage done to Nuremberg and other German cities from final Allied bombing in January and February of 1945, commentary on some of the trials that Edith attended, and the social activities that the judges and their families engage in while they are in Germany. While the Richmans and their daughter Elizabeth are in Germany, they spend time traveling around the country but also visit London, Paris, Amsterdam, Prague, and Switzerland. The end of their time in Germany is marked by a terrible automobile accident, where Edith Richman and another judge's wife are seriously injured and are hospitalized for several days. The final weeks of the journal document Edith working through recovery from a skull fracture and cracked pelvis. Photographs in the collection include a portrait of Judge Richman, the 1941 Indiana State Supreme Court, images from the trial Richman presided over in Nuremberg, and two photographs showing where Edith's automobile accident occurred and the wreckage.

## **SERIES CONTENTS**

### **Series 1: Coons Family**

#### CONTENTS

Addresses of Former Members of Battery 870<sup>th</sup> F.  
BN., n.d.

Harold M. Coons Pocket Diary, 1944-1945

Correspondence, Margaret Coons to Clara Coons,  
1944-1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Feb.-Mar. 1944

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Apr.-May 1944

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, June-July 1944

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Aug.-Sept. 1944

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Oct.-Nov. 1944

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Dec. 1944-Jan.  
1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Feb.-Mar. 1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Apr. 1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, May 1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, June 1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, July-Aug. 1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Sept.-Oct. 1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Nov.-Dec. 1945

Correspondence, Harold M. Coons, Jan.-Feb. 1946

#### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

Box 1, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

Box 1, Folder 12

Box 1, Folder 13

Box 1, Folder 14

Box 1, Folder 15

Box 2, Folder 1

Box 2, Folder 2

### **Series 2: Richman Family**

#### CONTENTS

Photographs, Frank Richman, Indiana Supreme Court  
and Nuremberg, 1941-1947

#### CONTAINER

Photographs,  
Folder 1 of 1

“Log of the Big Dipper”, 1944	Box 2, Folder 3
“Log of the Big Dipper”, 1944 [typed transcript]	Box 2, Folder 4
Edith Richman Journal, 1947-1948	Box 2, Folder 5
Frank Richman Reminiscence of Nuremberg Trials, 1947-1948 [typed transcript]	Box 2, Folder 6