

Collection #
SC 1509

**KURT VONNEGUT
COLLECTION, 1945–2011**

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

**VOLUME OF
COLLECTION:** 1 folder

**COLLECTION
DATES:** 1945–2011

PROVENANCE: Kurt Vonnegut, Sr. via Ralph Henderson, September 1954; Offices of the Indiana Historical Society, September 1979; Evaline Rhodehamel, Indianapolis, September, 2010; Lee Little, Brownsburg, Indiana, August 2011

RESTRICTIONS: None

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**ALTERNATE
FORMATS:**

**RELATED
HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION
NUMBERS:** 1954.0920; 1979.0917; 2010.0287; 2011.0216

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (b. 1922) was born in Indianapolis and is the son and grandson of Indianapolis architects. He attended Shortridge High School where he gained notoriety for his work on the school's newspaper, *The Echo*. Vonnegut attended Cornell University but left to enlist in the Army during World War II and served in the 106th Infantry Division. He was taken prisoner by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge on 19 December 1944 and worked as a laborer in Dresden during the firebombing of the city which claimed the lives of 135,000 civilians (February 1945). His experiences became the basis of his novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969).

After the war he attended the University of Chicago majoring in anthropology before obtaining a job in the public relations department at General Electric in Schenectady, New York, in the late 1940s. Vonnegut left GE in 1950 to write full time and sold his first short story to *Collier's Magazine* the same year. Among his books are *Player Piano*; *The Sirens of the Titans*; *Cat's Cradle*; *God Bless You Mr. Roswater*; *Welcome to the Monkey House*; *Breakfast of Champions*; *Palm Sunday*; *Timequake*; *Hocus Pocus*; *Galapagos*; *Hocus Pocus: Slapstick*; and *A Man Without a Country*.

Sources:

Encyclopedia of Indianapolis, p. 1073

Notables from Indiana Historical Society web site (www.indianahistory.org) accessed 1 March 2007.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of six letters written by or to Kurt Vonnegut, 1945–1980. The main item is a copy of letter written by Vonnegut to his father shortly after his release from a prisoner of war camp giving a detailed account of his capture and imprisonment, including a description of the results of the bombing of Dresden, 29 May 1945. The remaining five letters from 1970–80, deal with Vonnegut family genealogy and correspondence with the Indiana Historical Society. There is also an invitation to Vonnegut's wedding to Jane Marie Cox, 1 September 1945 addressed to Evaline Hitz (Rhodehamel). Also included is a paper by Lee Little, Summer 2011, titled "I Left Indianapolis because the Money was Gone" about Vonnegut's Roots.

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CONTAINER

Folder 1