

Collection #
OMB 0107

WILLIAM BILLINGS COLLECTION, CA. 1938–1946

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Processed by

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 oversized box; 8 artifacts

COLLECTION
DATES: ca. 1938–1946

PROVENANCE: Margaret L. Gust, Fort Wayne, Indiana, December 1999.

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: USS *Indianapolis* (M 0645); Colleen Mondor (M 0782)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.0240

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Beeker Billings (1916–1942) was born in Indianapolis and graduated from Purdue University in 1938. The following year he went to work for the Stewart-Warner Corporation but left later that year to join the U. S. Navy and became an aviator (pilot) attaining the rank of lieutenant junior grade (j.g.). Billings was assigned to the heavy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* where he served as the ship's observation plane pilot and was nicknamed "Ace". In early 1942 Billings married Margaret McNeely, also of Indianapolis. In early July 1942, Billing's plane was on a normal observation mission when the aircraft suddenly lost control and crashed into the freezing waters near the Aleutian Islands. Neither Billings nor his radioman survived.

Sources:

Information in collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains correspondence, personal literary writings, and published materials of William Billings. Among the items are poetry and short stories written for an English class at Purdue around 1938; ships publications from the USS *Indianapolis*, 1941 including the newsletter, *The Hoosier*, and the daily internal paper, *Deep Sea Daily* including the July 3, 1942 memorial edition of his death. There also are letters of condolence and memorial tributes from the ship's crew, the Navy, Purdue University, and the Stewart-Warner Corporation. Other materials include newspaper articles about the war and several typed but unpublished stories and plays written by Billings and one letter from Billings to "Aunt Mamie" in April 1942 shortly after his wedding. Most of these items were originally part of a scrapbook which also forms part of the collection.

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CONTENTS

Poetry and short stories from Purdue University
English class, ca. 1938

USS *Indianapolis* ship's publications, 1941–42

Scrapbook, Articles and Publications, ca. 1942

Newspaper Articles, 1942

Correspondence, Letters of Condolence and Tributes,
1942–1946

Decorations and Insignias from Uniform (8)

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1 Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Artifacts:
2000.0240

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, OMB 0107).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.