

MS-557: Harley R. Schneider Northwest Vandalia Modification Center Collection

Collection Number: MS-557

Title: Harley R. Schneider Northwest Vandalia Modification Center Collection

Dates: 1943-1944, 2000

Creator: Schneider, Harley R., 1909-2008

Summary/Abstract:

Harley R. Schneider was an employee of Northwest Airlines Corp. Schneider was a civil engineer employed to modify World War II bombers at Northwest Airlines Corp. Modification Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. Northwest Airlines expanded their facilities in 1943 which included a new Modification Center in Vandalia, Ohio. Schneider was reassigned to the Vandalia location in 1943. This collection consists of various materials from his time working at the Vandalia Modification Center including a detailed listing of the plant's project activities, parts and projects lists, a photograph, housing information, telephone directories, and forms from 1943-1944, as well as correspondence from 2000 with some of Schneider's later recollections.

Quantity/Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection.

Restrictions on Use:

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Preferred Citation:

[Description of item, Date, Box #, Folder #], MS-557, Harley R. Schneider Northwest Vandalia Modification Center Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Acquisition:

The collection was donated to Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries, by Harley R. Schneider in June 2000.

Accruals: No additional accruals are anticipated.

Existence and Location of Copies:

The plant photograph appears to be from the collections of the Ohio Historical Society.

Other Finding Aid:

The finding aid is available on the Special Collections & Archives, Wright State University Libraries web site at http://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collection_guides/guide_files/ms557.pdf. It is also available in the OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository at <http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/>.

Related Material:

[Harley R. Schneider Papers](#), Minnesota Historical Society

Processed by:

Finding aid written according to DACS standards by Alyssa Stark and Lisa Rickey, May 2018.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged in a single series of 12 folders.

Biographical/Historical Note:

Harley Robert Schneider was born July 1, 1909, in New Ulm, Brown County, Minnesota. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in civil engineering. From 1935 to 1942, Schneider was an engineering supervisor for the Works Progress Administration in Brown County, Minnesota.

In 1943, Schneider became employed as a civil engineer at the headquarters of Northwest Airlines located near St. Paul, Minnesota, and was promoted to materials control supervisor. St. Paul and Holeman Field, North Carolina, were two large Aircraft Modification Centers. These modification centers were created so that larger war production facilities did not have to stop production to modify aircraft. After the bombing on Pearl Harbor, there was an increase of civil corporation's involvement with war production. Northwest Airlines expanded their production facilities to include a Modification Center in Vandalia, Ohio, at the Dayton Municipal Airport, to accommodate increased need for aircraft modification.

Schneider and several other men were relocated from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Vandalia, Ohio. Schneider recalled the transfers group having to leave their families behind. The group of relocated men rented an apartment in nearby Tipp City but were eventually moved to the Air Force Temporary Housing in Vandalia, Ohio. Schneider's family, his wife Oradelle and two daughters, joined him in Vandalia by winter of 1943. They occupied one of the family units in the Air Force Temporary Housing facility.

The main modification projects conducted at the Vandalia facility were: the Glider Project (converting CG-4A's to CG-4C's); the UC-45 Project (converting AT-7's to UC-45E's for special Army work); the AT-6 Project (winterizing AT-6D's); Cold Weather Test Project (performing cold weather testing on several different aircraft); and Special Photographic Projects (modifying a B-24, a P-38, and P-39 for special radar and photography installations).

Following World War II, Schneider became the city engineer in New Ulm, Minnesota, and held that position until his retirement in 1975. Schneider died February 3, 2008, in New Ulm.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection documents the Northwest Vandalia Modification Center in Vandalia, Ohio, during World War II, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1943 to 1944. World War II era materials include: a detailed listing of the plant's project activities (including aircraft serial numbers, arrival and departure dates, and descriptions of what was done to each); parts and projects lists; a photograph of the plant exterior; housing information, including a floorplan sketch and lease agreement; telephone directories for both the Modification Center and Wright Field/Patterson Field; and blank forms for Modification Center activities. The collection also includes correspondence dated 2000 recording some of Schneider's later recollections, as well as his wife's Rike-Kumler charge card (metal card with carrying case).

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Schneider, Harley R., 1909-2008

Organizations/Corporate Names

Northwest Airlines Corporation – History – 20th century

Places

Vandalia (Ohio) – History – 20th century

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (Ohio) – History – 20th century

Subjects (General)

Aeronautics – History – 20th century

World War, 1939-1945 – War work

Material Types

Directories

Photographs

Occupations

Engineers

Collection Inventory

Box	File	Description	Date
1	1	Accelerated Service Test Branch and Modification Activities, Vandalia, Ohio	1943-1944
1	2	Northwest Vandalia Modification Center Telephone Directory	1943
1	3	Photo of Northwest Vandalia Modification Center	Circa 1943-1944
1	4	Hand Drawn Map of Family Unit, Temporary Air Force Housing, at Vandalia	1943-1944
1	5	Dwelling Lease for Housing at Vandalia	1943 Sept.
1	6	List of Test Aircraft Parts	1943 Dec.
1	7	List of Outstanding Requisitions	1944 Feb
1	8	Blank Forms from Modification Center	Circa 1944
1	9	Wright Field/Patterson Field Telephone Directory	1943 Oct.
1	10	List of Classifications and Their Assignments: Patterson Field, Air Service Command	1944 May 8
1	11	Rike-Kumler Co. Charge Card	1943-1944
1	12	Correspondence: Memories of Harley R. Schneider	2000 May