

**Finding Aid for the
William L. Gerig papers
OBU.2019.005
May 2022**



**OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

*Archives & Special Collections
Riley-Hickingbotham Library
Ouachita Baptist University
410 Ouachita Street
Arkadelphia, AR 71998*

Repository: Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University

Creator: William L. Gerig

Title: William L. Gerig papers

Bulk Dates: 1930-1947

Inclusive Dates: 1886-1995

Quantity: 6.69 c.f.; 11 boxes and Map Case

Preferred Citation: William L. Gerig papers, OBU.2019.005, Archives & Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

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Abstract: Contains correspondences, newspaper and journal clippings, slides, photographs, scrapbooks, pamphlets, blueprints, maps, certificates, artifacts, and educational books relating to engineer William Gerig's service in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi River Commission, and Alaskan Railroad Commission.

Identification: OBU.2019.005

Language: English

Arrangement: This collection is organized by format. Correspondence, newspaper articles, and journal articles are organized chronologically.

Series 1: Correspondence

Series 2: Newspaper Articles

Series 3: Engineering Papers

Series 4: Audiovisual

Subseries a: Postcards

Subseries b: Photos of Gerig

Subseries c: Photos of U.S. Hopper *Gerig*

Subseries d: Photos of Alaska

Subseries e: Photos of Fort Peck Dam

Subseries f: Photos of Panama Canal

Subseries g: Photos of Gerig family

Series 5: Publications

Subseries a: Panama Canal Publications

Subseries b: Alaska Publications

Subseries c: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Publications

Subseries d: Educational Books

Subseries e: Journal Articles

Series 6: Certificates

Series 7: Artifacts

Series 8: Ephemera

Scope and Contents

Correspondences, newspaper and journal articles relating to Gerig's service as engineer and his death; photographs of Gerig, Gerig family, Gerig dredge ship, Panama Canal, Alaska, and various dam constructions; scrapbooks; educational publications; certificates; engineering blueprints and maps; artifacts including a shovel and machete.

Biographical Summary

William Lee Gerig was born on 25 March 1866, in Columbia, Missouri. He met Frances Crow while working in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and on 21 January 1890, they got married. They had two children, Francis Austin Gerig, who married Margaret Scott, and Mildred Gerig, who married Jacob Lawrence Newberry. Gerig received his degree in civil engineering at the University of Missouri in 1885. In 1938, he received an Honorary Doctor of Law degree from his alma mater. In 1890, Gerig was accepted to the Mississippi River Commission, and he stayed there until 1905. Gerig also served on the Alaskan Engineering Commission from 1919-1923. He worked for the United States Corps of Engineers, leading the construction of the Pacific side of the Panama Canal and Gatun Dam in 1905-1908. Gerig worked as an engineer for the Alaskan Railroad from 1917-1923, and he worked as an engineer for the Fort Peck Dam in Montana in the 1930s and 1940s. Other constructions that Gerig worked on were the Tappan Dam, Saluda Dam, Tionesta Dam, Muskingum River Dam, and the Pacific and Eastern Railways in Oregon. In 1938, Gerig retired from the Office of Chief Engineers. On 3 April 1944, Gerig died in his Arkadelphia home at the age of 78. In 1946, the U. S. Corps of Engineers built a U. S. hopper dredger ship, named the Gerig, in his memory.

Bibliography

"A Career of Outstanding Usefulness." *Arkansas Gazette*, 1944. OBU.2019.005, box 2840, folder 012. William L. Gerig Papers. Ouachita Baptist University Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

“OBITUARY: Dr. William Gerig, Army Engineer, Dies.” 1944. OBU.2019.005, box 2840, folder 012. William L. Gerig Papers. Ouachita Baptist University Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

“William Gerig, One of Arkadelphia’s Most Famous Sons, Will Be Honored Posthumously by U.S. Army.” *Daily Siftings Herald*, 24 August 1955. OBU.2019.005, box 2840, folder 012. William L. Gerig Papers. Ouachita Baptist University Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

“Dredge is Floating Monument to one of Long Line of Famous Engineers.” *Ingalls News*, 8 November 1945. OBU.2019.005, box 2840, folder 015. William L. Gerig Papers. Ouachita Baptist University Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

“William Gerig, M. Am. Soc. C. E.: Died April 3, 1944.” *American Society of Civil Engineers Memoirs*. n.d. OBU.2019.005, box 2840, folder 015. William L. Gerig Papers. Ouachita Baptist University Archives and Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

Keywords

Anchorage (AK.)
Arkadelphia (AR.)
Canals—Design and construction
Civil engineering
Colón, Panama
Dredging
Engineering, Railroad
Fort Peck (MT.)
Gatún, Panama
Gerig, William Lee (1866-1944)
Gerig, Frances Crow (1870-1962)
Gerig, Francis Austin (1891-1971)
Goethals, George Washington (1858-1928)
Honorary degrees
Kittrell, Clark (1893-1977)
Memphis (Shelby County), Tennessee
Newberry, Mildred Gerig (1892-1971)
Stevens, John Frank (1853-1943)

Processed by Makenna Munger, 2022 with revisions by Taylor Lawson, 2025.

Contents Inventory

Box/Folder	Description	Date
Map Case		
MC.32.001	Fort Peck Dam [MT] investigations/observations.	1935-1949
MC 32.002	Fort Peck Dam stability analysis.	1940
MC 32.003	Fort Peck Dam report sheets.	1933-1940
MC 32.004	Saluda River Dam [SC] data.	1930
MC 32.005	Conchas Dam [NM] South Dike diagram.	1937
MC 32.006	Denison Dam [OK] map.	1939
MC 32.007	Youghiogheny Dam [PA/MD] model studies.	1940
MC 32.008	Jacksonville, FL reports of dredges.	1941-1942
MC 32.009	Crooked Creek Dam [PA] flood data.	Not dated
MC 32.010	Unidentified map/report sheet.	Not dated
Box 2840		
2840/001	Correspondence.	1895-1922
2840/002	Correspondence	1938
2840/003	Correspondence	Jan-July 1939
2840/004	Correspondence.	Aug-Dec 1939
2840/005	Correspondence.	Jan 1940-Apr 1942
2840/006	Correspondence.	Sep 1946-1947
2840/007	Correspondence.	Nov 1974
2840/008	Correspondence.	Jan 1995 and not dated
2840/009	Newspaper articles.	Mar 1902-Feb 1909
2840/010	Newspaper articles.	Dec 1915-1921

2840/011	Newspaper articles.	Feb 1922-Jun 1938
2840/012	Newspaper articles.	Oct 1940-May 1963
2840/013	Newspaper articles.	Undated
2840/014	Engineering articles.	Mar 1912-Sep 1940
2840/015	Journal articles.	Apr 1944-Nov 1972
2840/016	Journal articles.	Not dated
Box 2674		
2674/001	Photographs of William Gerig.	1907-1975
2674/002	Photographs of the <i>USS Gerig</i> .	1946
2674/003	Phi Beta Kappa Society pamphlet.	14 Aug 1938 and not dated
2674/004	National Geographic Society membership certificate.	Feb 1906
2674/005	"The Panama Canal: 25 th Anniversary." booklet.	1939
2674/006	"The Panama Canal." booklet.	1962
2674/007	"Negotiation of New Panama Canal Treaties: Background and Pros and Cons," from Library of Congress Congressional Research Service.	23 Nov 1971
2674/008	"Controversy Over Proposed Revision of the Panama Canal Treaty." from <i>Congressional Digest</i> .	Nov 1972
2674/009	Panama Canal controversy newspaper clippings.	1972-1978
2674/010	"Welcome to the Canal Zone and the Panama Canal, "The Gerig" and "The Panama Canal and The Canal Zone" pamphlets.	Not dated
2674/011	"Special Message to the President Concerning the Panama Canal" booklet [partial].	Not dated

2674/012	"Alaska Nuggets." poetry book by Frank B. Camp.	1921
2674/013	"Alaska the Land of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" booklet.	1938
2674/014	"Rails Across the Tundra: A Historical Album of the Alaska Railroad" book by Stan Cohen.	1984
2674/015	"Alaska and the Yukon" booklet.	Not dated
2674/016	Proceedings of the American Society of Civil Engineers.	May 1941
2674/017	"Looking Towards the Future: A Rewarding Career with the Corps of Engineers Dredging Fleet" booklet produced by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.	Not dated
2674/018	"Historic Adventure Land of the Northwest." booklet by Grace Flandrau.	Not dated
2674/019	University of Missouri 62 nd Alumni Association Annual Reunion booklet.	4 Jun 1914
2674/020	University of Missouri commencement programs and honorary degree recipient instructions.	1938
2674/021	Event invitations, programs, and menus.	1902-1921
2674/022	William Gerig bank notes.	1906-1939
2674/023	Transportation tickets and passes.	1908-1923
2674/024	Marine Design Division correspondence list.	15 Aug 1938
Box 2675		
2675/001	Panama Canal photographs.	1906-1907
2675/002	Panama Canal (6) and Yellowstone National Park (1) postcards.	20 Aug 1940 and n.d.
2675/003	Panama Canal reports.	Not dated
2675/004	Alaska photographs.	1919
2675/005	Fort Peck Dam photographs.	Oct 1934-Jul 1940

2675/006	Fort Peck Dam photographs from slides of earth slide and Calyx Hole.	Circa 1930s and 1940s
2675/007	For Peck Dam reports.	Dec 1933-Jun 1941
2675/008	Fort Peck Dam reports.	Not dated
2675/009	Sardis Reservoir Project (Vicksburg, MS), Board of Consulting Engineers Meeting minutes and Soil Laboratory Analysis.	1931-1939
2675/010	Tappan Dam [OH] reports.	1934
2675/011	Conchas Dam, NM foundation sliding tests.	1938
2675/012	"Navigation on the Ohio River" report prepared by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.	1938
2675/013	Caddoa Dam Site Mechanical Analysis Diagram reports.	1938
Box 2842		
2842/001	"Hydrology of Mahoning [PA] Creek."	1939
2842/002	Crooked Creek Dam photographs and diagrams.	1939
2842/003	Crooked Creek Dam reports.	Not dated
2842/004	Youghiogheny Dam reports.	1939
2842/005	"Supplementary Report on Youghiogheny Dam Model Study."	1940
2842/006	Conemaugh Dam [PA] reports.	1939
2842/007	Tionesta Dam [PA] reports.	Not dated
2842/008	Unidentified reports.	Not dated
Box 2676		
2676	"Panama Patchwork" book by James S. Gilbert.	1905
2676	"Alaska Engineering Commission: Reports of the Alaskan Engineering Commission for	1916

the Period from March 12, 1914 to December 31, 1915.”

2676	“Annual Report of the Isthmian Canal Commission for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1907.”	1907
2676	“Annual Report of the State Engineer and Surveyor of the State of New York.”	1908
2676	“The Panama Canal and its Makers” book by Vaughan Cornish.	1909
2676	“Essentials of Calculus” book by E.J. Townsend and G.A. Goodenough.	1910
2676	“A Trip to Panama” book.	1907
2676	“A Trip: Panama Canal” book.	1911
2676	“The Strains in Framed Structures with Numerous Practical Applications to Cranes-Bridge, Roof and Suspension Trusses-Braced Arches-Pivot and Draw Spans-Continuous Girders, etc.,” by A. Jay Du Bois.	1886
Box 2843		
2843	Signature book given to William Gerig by the Engineer Department of the U.S. Army.	1938
2843	Phi Beta Kappa pendants (2).	1885
2843	Scrapbooks of photos of the Panama Canal and the surrounding area.	1905-1907
2843	Scrapbook of newspapers clippings and photos of William Gerig.	1907-1965 and n.d.
2843	Slides from Panama Canal Company Graphic Branch.	No date
2843	Cloth stitching of the Panama Canal.	No date
2843	Francis Austin (F.A.) Gerig diary.	1918
2843	William Gerig journal.	1892-1923

2843	William Gerig time book.	1891
Box 2844 2844	US Army Corps of Engineers Flag (4' x 6').	Not dated
Box 2845 2845	William Gerig photographs (11" x 14" and 12" x 15").	Not dated
2845	Gerig marriage license (framed).	21 Jan 1890
2845	Francis Crow Gerig photograph (11" x 14").	Not dated
2845	Collage of memorabilia and articles related to the dredge boat <i>Gerig</i> .	Oct-Nov 1946
2845	Invitation to Upper Missouri Historical Expedition Memorial Celebrations.	1925
Box 2846	Wooden plaque from the christening of the dredge boat <i>Gerig</i> with broken champagne bottle bound in silk.	25 Oct 1946
Box 2847	Machete.	Not dated
Box 2848	Wooden shovel initialed C. P. originally belonging to French canal digger.	ca. 1881-1899