

Finding Aid to the Critchfield Family Papers

Critchfield Family

Critchfield Family Papers, 1937-1994

1.4 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 210

[Biography](#)

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OVERVIEW

Links: Finding Aid to the [Richard Critchfield Photograph Collection](#)
Finding Aid to the initial accession (Mss 156) of [Richard Critchfield Papers](#)
Finding Aid to the second accession (Mss 206) of [Richard Critchfield Papers](#)

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Peggy Critchfield Moffett 1997 (Acc 2480).

Property rights: The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Critchfield Family Papers, MS 210, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

The Critchfield family begins with the marriage of Ralph James Critchfield of Hunter, North Dakota and Anne Louise Williams of Viola, Iowa in 1913. Anne Louise had taught school in Hunter prior to their marriage. Jim, as he was always known, and Anne Louise resided in Hunter, Maddock, Fessenden, and Fargo, North Dakota. The family also resided for a short period of time in the early 1920s in Minneapolis,

Minnesota while he completed his medical degree. They had five children: James, Betty, William, Peggy, and Richard. The family moved to Fargo in the early 1930s and where Jim died in 1937. Anne later worked as a Fargo policewoman to support the family. In 1948 James Critchfield's wife, Connie, and David Baldwin were killed in a car accident near Mechanicsville, Iowa. After the accident Anne, Jim, his children, and Peggy went to Germany to be with James, while Richard moved to Seattle to live with Betty and complete high school there. It was not until 1974 that all five Critchfield children and their mother were together again. Jim Critchfield moved to Virginia, and Bill, Peggy, and eventually Richard made their residences in Berkeley, California. Their mother Anne died in 1982 in California. Bill died in 1989 and Richard died on December 10, 1994.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Critchfield family was one that wrote numerous letters. The family moved around North Dakota, Iowa, and even Germany. Many letters were written to relatives back home in Iowa or North Dakota. The family was not always together. William "Bill" Critchfield attended U.C. Berkeley while the family resided in Germany and previous to this he was stationed at various forts throughout the United States and the Solomon Islands during World War II. Richard (Pat or Dick) Critchfield attended high school and college in Seattle, Washington while the family resided in Iowa and Germany. Peggy Critchfield Moffett lived in California and New Zealand. They all shared a strong concept of family and were determined to keep in touch with one another. The letters reflect wishes to know how things are at home and what has happened in their absence. The letters also let the family members know what was happening in the letter writer's life. The letters are divided into three correspondence series: Family and friends, Critchfield family, and Collins family. In the finding aid folder are typed comments made by Peggy Moffett regarding the letters written by each person.

The [Family and Friends Correspondence Series](#) consists of letters from Menten Sveen (Richard Critchfield's fraternity brother and roommate from the University of Washington), various family friends and letters from the Critchfield's Iowa cousins. The letters from Sveen are checking up on Richard to see how he is doing after graduation and are rather few in number. The letters from the family friends are merely lines dropped to ask how things are going. The letters from the Iowa cousins consist mainly of wedding announcements, thank you notes, and Christmas and birthday cards.

The [Critchfield Family Correspondence Series](#) consists mainly of letters from William Critchfield, Richard Critchfield, Anne Louise Critchfield and Peggy Moffett Critchfield. These letters consist of family news and what was going on in their lives. The majority of Bill's letters cover his years as a navy Seabee and his travels from various bases in the United States to Treasury Island located in the Solomon Island chain. Richard Critchfield's letters cover his years as a journalist covering the Third World and a small fraction cover his university days in Austria. The majority of his correspondence is from his time of teaching journalism at Nagpur, India up to the early 1990s. Richard's correspondence during his years of reporting in Vietnam is scant because of the constant stress he was under. Also his letters let his family know roughly what his location would be at a given time, especially when he was researching his books. He signed his letters either Pat or Dick. Peggy's letters mainly cover her New Zealand years, 1971-1980. Her letters are to let her family know what is going on in New Zealand and an attempt to find out what is

happening back home. Anne's letters are mainly to her sisters as well as her children Bill, Richard and Peggy. The majority of her correspondence is from 1948-1950 when she lived in Germany and was writing home to her sisters. Anne signed her letters either Louise or Louie. There are also letters from Betty Critchfield Herm (a sister to Richard, Bill and Peggy) and her two daughters, Ann Herm Foley and Jean Herm Krogster. These letters consist mainly of family news.

The [Collins Family Correspondence Series](#) consists of letters from Helen and Mary Collins, Anne Louise Critchfield's sisters. The letters from Mary Collins are very few in number and consist mainly of family news. The letters from Helen Collins cover the years 1974-1986 with the majority covering 1980-1982. She wrote quite often to her sister, Anne, especially after Anne broke her hip and moved into a nursing home. Helen then wrote to Richard or Bill saying she was concerned about Anne's health and asked them to look in on her along with letters of family news.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder Contents

1/1 Finding aid, and notes by Peggy Moffett

Family and Friends Correspondence Series

1/2 Letters from family and friends

1/3 Letters from Menten Sveen

1/4 Letters from Iowa cousins

Critchfield Family Correspondence Series

1/5 Letters from Betty Critchfield Herm, 1948, 1953, 1959-62, 1969-76

1/6 Letters from Betty Critchfield Herm, 1976-82

1/7 Letters from Ann Herm Foley and Jean Herm Krogstar

1/8 Letters from William Critchfield and memorabilia

1/9 Letters from William Critchfield, 1943

1/10 Letters from William Critchfield, 1944

2/1 Letters from William Critchfield, 1944

2/2 Letters from William Critchfield, 1944-46

2/3 Letters from William Critchfield, 1947-90 and his obituaries

2/4 Letters from Richard Critchfield, 1948-61

2/5 Letters from Richard Critchfield, 1961-74

2/6 Letters from Richard Critchfield, 1974-82

3/1 Letters from Richard Critchfield, 1982-94

3/2 Letters from Anne Critchfield, 1948-49

3/3 Letters from Anne Critchfield, 1950, 1953, 1959-60

3/4 Letters from Anne Critchfield, 1961-80

- 3/5 Letters from Peggy Critchfield Moffett, 1937, 1949-69
- 3/6 Letters from Peggy Critchfield Moffett, 1970-81, 1986
- 3/7 Letters from Burke and Helen Critchfield, 1959-61

Collins Family Correspondence Series

- 4/1 Letters from Helen Collins, 1952, 1960, 1974-80
- 4/2 Letters from Helen Collins, 1980
- 4/3 Letters from Helen Collins, 1980-82
- 4/4 Letters from Helen Collins, 1982-86
- 4/5 Letters from Mary Collins, 1948, 1950, 1956