

Inventory of the

Judy Nelson Mills

Rockford, Illinois

Papers

In the

Regional History Center

RC 298

INTRODUCTION

Judy Nelson Mills of Rockford, Illinois donated her Vietnam War correspondence to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on April 13, 2010.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection. Many of the soldiers have expressed to the donor that this is a difficult subject matter to discuss. Therefore researchers must use extreme caution if or when contacting the soldiers mentioned in this collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 2.75
Number of containers: 7
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 298

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Judy Nelson Mills Papers consists of two series: soldiers' correspondence and book research. The first series includes letters written to Mills by Vietnam soldiers. The second series consists of research materials gathered by Mills in the late 1990s and early 2000s when thinking of writing a book using the correspondence. This series includes three subseries: Soldiers, Book, and Cassettes. Both series contain photos from soldiers, some from during the war and some from after. The collection also contains audio cassettes containing interviews with soldiers, talks on the radio, and a video cassette of her giving a presentation at a Hononegah High School.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In December of 1966, Judy Nelson (later Mills) began writing letters to Rockford-area soldiers listed in the local newspaper. Judy's father, who was a veteran of WWII, inspired her to do something kind for the soldiers. Every night Judy and her parents sat at the kitchen table to read every letter. The soldiers and Mills corresponded for a year and a half. Mills kept her letters strictly friendly and just wanted the soldiers to know that people back home continued to care for them. Writing the letters wasn't cheap. Friends and coworkers donated money to her so she could continue her campaign, and the local newspaper asked for future donations while naming her the letter-writing champion of 1967. Mills' blossoming relationship with her future husband, whom she would later divorce, along with the difficulties of funding and finding time for her letter-writing caused her to stop in 1968. The estimated total count of the letters written by Mills between 1967 and 1968 numbers anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000. Two hundred fifty-seven servicemen wrote back. By the time she stopped writing in 1968, she had over 500 response letters. Mills passed away on March 16, 2011 in her home after a prolonged health battle.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

Mills, Judy Nelson
Nelson Mills, Judy
Rockford
Veterans
Vietnam War

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Series I: Soldiers' Correspondence		
1	1	A - Boxleitner, 1967-1968
	2	Boyle-Byers, 1967-1968
	3	C, 1967-1968
	4	D-E, 1967-1968
	5	F-G, 1967-1968
2	1	H-J, 1967-1968
	2	K-L, 1967-1968
3	1	M-Mc, 1967-1968
	2	N-P, 1967-1968
	3	Q-S, 1967-1968
	4	T-V, 1967-1968
	5	W-Z, 1967-1968

Series II: Book Research

Subseries A: Soldiers

4	1	Belcher, Vernon Eugene, 1999
	2	Bowers, Riley, 1999
	3	Boxleitner, Norman, 1967
	4	Brady, Pat, (1967-1999)
	5	Brzazgon, Stan, (1967-1999)
	6	Bunger, Glenn, 1999
	7	Carlson, Don, 1967
	8	Carlson, Ron, n.d.
	9	Carlston, Bill, (1967-1999)
	10	Cook, George T., 1968
	11	Coy, Walter, n.d.
	12	Dyer, Jay, (1967-1999)
	13	Edwards, David, n.d.
	14	Frye, James, 1999
	15	Gann, Eugene, (1967-1999)
	16	Gulley, Herbert, n.d.
	17	Hansen, Dick W., n.d.

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
4	18	Hendrickson, Chuck, 1968
	19	Hill, George, n.d.
	20	Hoglund, Allen, (1967-1999)
	21	Johnson, Dennis, 1965
	22	Kawake, Andrew, n.d.
	23	King, Thomas, n.d.
	24	Laursen, Ed, 1968
	25	Lavern, Joseph, n.d..
	26	Lewis, Richard, n.d.
	27	Lindsay, Jerry, 1999
	28	Ludwig, David, 1967
	29	McDonald, Thomas, n.d.
	30	McFadden, John, n.d.
	31	Morgan, Richard L., 1967
	32	Nelson, Ken, n.d.
	33	Newcomer, Dave, 1967
	34	Olson, David E., 1967
	35	Payne, Joseph, n.d.
	36	Politsch, Gary C., 1968
	37	Pottinger, Bill, (1967-1999)
	38	Potts, Jim, 1999
	39	Ratcliff, Earnest J., n.d.
	40	Reynold, Robert, n.d.
	41	Savalla, Louis, 1967-1999
42	Schwandt, Rodney, n.d.	
43	Slayton, Al, 1968	
44	Smith, Glenn A., n.d.	
5	1	Sugar, Nicholas, n.d.
	2	Ulrey, Don, (1968-1999)
	3	Vance, Darrell, n.d.
	4	Van Holten, Roger, 1968
	5	White, Robert, n.d.

Subseries B: Book

6	Mills, Judy Nelson, 1967-1968
7	Contact Information One (Yellow), n.d.
8	Contact Information Two (Red), n.d.
9	Contact Information Three (Blue), 1999
10	Helpers, n.d.
11	Interview Questions, n.d.

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	5
5	12	Judy's Prologues, n.d.	
	13	Rejection Letters, 1999	
	14	Release Form, n.d.	
	15	Research Progress, 1999-2001	
	16	Speech, n.d.	
	17	Themes & Patterns, n.d.	
	18	Veteran Lists, n.d.	
	19	V.N. Words of Encouragement, 1999	
	20	Unidentified Photos, n.d.	
	21	Unidentified Photos, 1967-1968	
	22	Negatives, n.d.	
6		Note cards of Soldiers' Contact Information	
		Subseries C: Cassettes	
		VHS: Hononegah High School Speech, 1999	
		Microcassette:	
7	1	Bill Pottinger, 1999	
	2	Inaudible	
		Standard Cassette:	
	3	Brady, Pat, 1999	
	4	Brady, Pat/Gann, Eugene, 1999	
	5	Gann, Eugene, 1999	
	6-7	Bunger, Bill, 1999	
	8-9	Carlston, Bill, 1999	
	10	Pottinger, Bill, 1999	
	11-13	Savalla, Louis, 1999	
	14	Hononegah High School Speech, 1999	
	15	KTRS Radio, St. Louis	
	16	Station 1330 Interview, 1999	
	17	Viet Now Speech, 1999	