

**Francis W. Reichelderfer Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2009**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm83061564>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms009149>

Prepared by Kathleen Dondanville

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## Collection Summary

**Title:** Francis W. Reichelderfer Papers

**Span Dates:** 1918-1983

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1939-1967)

**ID No.:** MSS61564

**Creator:** Reichelderfer, Francis W. (Francis Wilton), 1895-1983

**Extent:** 3,150 items

**Extent:** 9 containers

**Extent:** 3.6 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm83061564>

**Summary:** United States naval officer and meteorologist. Correspondence, memoranda, agendas, notes, speeches, writings, transcripts of radio broadcasts, interviews, biographical material, clippings, printed matter, photographs, and other papers pertaining primarily to Reichelderfer's career in meteorology as chief of the United States Weather Bureau.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Reichelderfer, Francis W. (Francis Wilton), 1895-1983.

### Organizations

United States. Weather Bureau.

World Meteorological Organization.

### Subjects

Meteorological satellites.

Meteorological services.

Meteorology--Research--United States.

Military meteorology.

Rain-making.

Typhoons--Thailand.

Weather.

### Occupations

Meteorologists.

Naval officers.

## Provenance

The papers of Francis W. Reichelderfer, United States naval officer and meteorologist, were given to the Library of Congress by his son, Bruce A. Reichelderfer, in 1983.

## Processing History

The papers of Francis W. Reichelderfer were arranged and described in 1991. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Francis W. Reichelderfer is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Francis W. Reichelderfer are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Francis W. Reichelderfer Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1895, Aug. 6	Born, Harlan, Ind.
1917	A.B. in science, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.
1918	Ensign, United States Navy; stationed at the naval air station in North Sydney, Nova Scotia
1919	Served in Lisbon, Portugal, as naval meteorologist; provided weather information and forecasts for naval aircraft making the first transatlantic flights
1920	Promoted to lieutenant Married Beatrice Hoyle
1922-1928	Officer in charge, Naval Aerological Service, Washington, D.C.
1928-1931	Served on airship <i>Los Angeles</i> , Lakehurst, N.J.
1931	Postgraduate study at the Bergen Geophysical Institute, Norway
1936	Executive officer, naval air station at Lakehurst, N.J.; served as observer on German airship <i>Hindenburg</i>
1938	Promoted to commander Appointed chief, United States Weather Bureau, Washington, D.C.
1939	Retired from United States Navy
1940-1941	President, American Meteorological Association
1942-1945	Assisted in the organization of the Joint Meteorological Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for wartime operations
1944-1947	President, American Geophysical Union
1951-1955	President, World Meteorological Organization
1963	Retired from United States Weather Bureau
1983, Jan. 25	Died, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers Francis Wilton Reichelderfer (1895-1983) span the years 1918-1983, with the bulk of the papers concentrated from 1939 through 1967. The collection primarily pertains to Reichelderfer's career in meteorology as chief of the United States Weather Bureau. Also included are records concerning his naval career and his speeches and writings. The collection is divided into two series: [Speeches and Writings](#), and [Subject File](#).

In the years prior to his death in 1983, Reichelderfer weeded his papers and destroyed thousands of items of personal and official correspondence, reports, memoranda, desk reminders, and other valuable materials relating to his meteorological work. Although he selected items to serve as "representative samples" of his lifelong work in meteorology, the collection lacks comprehensive documentation of his activities as a naval meteorologist and the programs and policies enacted during his tenure as chief of the Weather Bureau. The information contained in the [Subject File](#) is fragmentary at best, but Reichelderfer kept many of his speeches and writings, and materials pertaining to some of his most significant achievements in the field of meteorology can be found scattered throughout the collection. The miscellaneous notes in the [Subject File](#) contain information regarding the kinds of materials Reichelderfer discarded.

The [Speeches and Writings](#) series is comprised of notes, drafts, final copies, and printed versions of addresses, remarks, lectures, articles, and papers by Reichelderfer primarily concerned with the Weather Bureau and its policies, plans, and programs. Other papers pertain to weather and wartime operations, forecasting methods, and weather control and modification, including artificial rainmaking. Of special note is Reichelderfer's 1932 paper, entitled *Norwegian Methods of Weather Analysis*, a study based on Norway's innovative air mass method of weather analysis and polar front theory. As early as 1922, Reichelderfer began adapting Norway's methods of weather analysis to the distinctive American weather system, thereby producing a new meteorological standard for the United States.

The [Subject File](#) contains correspondence, memoranda, reports, notes, photographs, and other material primarily pertaining to Reichelderfer's work as chief of the United States Weather Bureau. Included are files relating to the first weather satellites, weather forecasting and its effect on wartime operations, and early private meteorological services. The series also includes excellent biographical materials, records documenting his work as American representative of the World Meteorological Organization's mission to typhoon-ravaged Thailand in 1966-1967, and early naval reports regarding European forecasting methods. General and personal correspondence in the [Subject File](#) is meager and mostly concerns Reichelderfer's writings, his work at the Weather Bureau, and personal family matters.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in two series:

- [Speeches and Writings, 1925-1982](#)
- [Subject File, 1918-1983](#)

## Description of Series

### Container

BOX 1-2

### Series

#### Speeches and Writings, 1925-1982

Manuscripts in various stages of preparation, including notes, drafts, final copies, and printed versions of speeches, lectures, radio broadcasts, interviews, articles, statements, editorials, and papers by Reichelderfer.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder. A partial index is filed at the end of the series.

BOX 3-9

#### Subject File, 1918-1983

Correspondence, memoranda, reports, working notes, lists, certificates, newspaper clippings, agendas, printed matter, and photographs relating to Reichelderfer's career and interests as a meteorologist.

Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and chronologically thereunder.

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-2	<b>Speeches and Writings, 1925-1982</b> Manuscripts in various stages of preparation, including notes, drafts, final copies, and printed versions of speeches, lectures, radio broadcasts, interviews, articles, statements, editorials, and papers by Reichelderfer. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically thereunder. A partial index is filed at the end of the series.
BOX 1	Speeches
BOX 1	Addresses, 1939-1965, undated
BOX 1	Interviews, 1962-1965, 1982
BOX 1	Lectures, 1939-1958 (2 folders)
BOX 1	Papers presented, 1937-1960, undated
BOX 1	Radio broadcasts, 1939-1956
BOX 1	Remarks
BOX 1	1939-1956 (5 folders)
BOX 2	1957-1972, undated (2 folders)
BOX 2	Statements at congressional hearings, 1939-1962, undated
BOX 2	Writings
BOX 2	Articles
BOX 2	<i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> , 1955-1982
BOX 2	General, 1925-1979
BOX 2	Editorials, 1962, undated
BOX 2	Fragments and notes, 1944-1981, undated
BOX 2	Meteorological papers, 1929-1952, undated (2 folders)
BOX 2	Speeches written for others, 1939-1962, undated
BOX 2	Index, undated
BOX 3-9	<b>Subject File, 1918-1983</b> Correspondence, memoranda, reports, working notes, lists, certificates, newspaper clippings, agendas, printed matter, and photographs relating to Reichelderfer's career and interests as a meteorologist. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material and chronologically thereunder.
BOX 3	American Geophysical Union, 1963-1970
BOX 3	American Men of Science Association, 1964-1968
BOX 3	American Meteorological Society, 1928-1979, undated
BOX 3	Bergen Geophysical Institute, Norway, 1920-1932, 1967
BOX 3	Biographical material

## Subject File, 1918-1983

Container	Contents
BOX 3	Articles about Reichelderfer, 1939, 1950-1982, undated (3 folders)
BOX 3	Biographical sketches, 1963-1978, undated
BOX 3	Memoir notes, 1966-1977, undated
BOX 3	Newspaper clippings, 1929-1969
BOX 3	Reference book excerpts, 1945-1983, undated
BOX 3	Certificates, 1939-1970
BOX 4	Court case, rainmaker trial, 1964-1966
BOX 4	General correspondence, 1926-1982, undated (2 folders)
BOX 4	Gunn, Ross, 1966-1975, undated
BOX 4	Invitations and programs, 1946-1965, undated
BOX 4	Martin-Marietta Corp., 1963-1967
BOX 4	Miscellaneous notes, 1960-1982, undated
BOX 4	National Academy of Sciences, 1960-1978
BOX 4	Navy records
BOX 4	Correspondence and memoranda, 1923-1938
BOX 4	Officer's record of fitness, 1918-1938
BOX 4	Orders and commendations, 1926-1938
BOX 5	Reports
BOX 5	European weather forecasting methods, 1931-1934
BOX 5	General, 1926-1927, undated
BOX 5	Personal
BOX 5	Family correspondence, 1968-1983, undated
BOX 5	Notes and miscellany, 1944-1974, undated
BOX 5	Photographs
BOX 5	Banquets and conferences, 1963-1970, undated
BOX 5	Family, undated
BOX 5	International meteorological organizations, 1946-1980
BOX 5	National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, 1941-1950, undated
BOX 5	Naval career, 1918, 1930
BOX 5	Portraits, 1939, 1957, undated
BOX 5	United States Weather Bureau, 1926-1971, undated
BOX 5	Weather phenomena, miscellany, 1928-1950, undated
BOX 5	Publications
BOX 5	1926-1959 (2 folders)
BOX 6	1960-1978, undated (5 folders)
BOX 6	Unidentified flying objects, 1969, undated
BOX 6	United States/Japan Cooperative Science Program
BOX 6	Agendas and programs, 1963-1969, undated
BOX 7	Correspondence, 1963-1972
BOX 7	Notes, 1966-1968, undated
BOX 7	Reports, 1963-1971 (2 folders)
BOX 7	United States Weather Bureau

## Subject File, 1918-1983

### Container

### Contents

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BOX 7	Advisory Committee on Weather Services, 1955, 1963
BOX 7	Correspondence and memoranda, 1939-1963 (2 folders)
BOX 7	Federov, Eugene, 1961-1962
BOX 7	General reports, 1940-1963, undated
BOX 8	Krick, Irving, 1940-1971
BOX 8	Miscellaneous, 1939, undated
BOX 8	Nineteenth-century weather reports project, 1959
BOX 8	Notes (desk reminders), 1941-1962
BOX 8	Private meteorological services, 1939-1962, undated
BOX 8	Press releases and other publications, 1939-1970
BOX 8	Reference lists, 1962
BOX 8	Satellites, 1958-1966, undated
BOX 8	Weather control and modification, 1946-1963, undated
BOX 8	World War II, 1942-1945, undated
BOX 8	White House Conference on International Cooperation, 1965
BOX 9	World Meteorological Organization
BOX 9	Advancement of atmospheric sciences, 1962-1976
BOX 9	Correspondence and memoranda, 1962-1974, undated
BOX 9	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East Typhoon Mission, 1966-1967
BOX 9	Agendas and programs
BOX 9	Correspondence
BOX 9	Notes
BOX 9	Reports
BOX 9	Miscellaneous, 1957-1963
BOX 9	Notes, 1964, undated
BOX 9	World weather watch, 1963-1964