

Emma Delano Pettengill collection

AFC 2001/001/57842

Guides to the Collections in the Veterans History Project



**Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.**

July 2018

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

Catalog Record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017655349>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadvhp.vh018004>

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Finding aid encoded by Samantha Meier, July 2018

Collection Summary

Title: Emma Delano Pettengill collection: Veterans History Project (U.S.)

Inclusive Dates: 1942-1991

Call No.: AFC 2001/001/57842

Creators: Pettengill, Emma Delano; Pettengill, Kenneth Herman

Extent (photographs): 1 photograph.

Extent (manuscripts): 1 clipping.

Extent (manuscripts): 4 military papers.

Extent (manuscripts): 523 letters.

Language: Collection material in English.

Location: Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017655349>

Summary: Collection includes clippings, correspondence, military papers, printed matter, and photographic prints.

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

Pettengill, Claire

Pettengill, Emma Delano, 1922-1999--Correspondence.

Pettengill, Emma Delano, 1922-1999.

Pettengill, Kenneth Herman, 1926-2003--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Folklife Center

Howard W. Gilmore (Submarine tender)

United States. Naval Reserve. Women's Reserve.

Veterans History Project (U.S.)

Subjects

Meteorologists--United States--Correspondence

Submariners--United States--Correspondence

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, Female.

World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives, American.

World War, 1939-1945--Veterans--New York (State)

Form/Genre

Clippings.

Correspondence

Manuscripts.

Photographs.

Arrangement

The collection has been arranged into two series: Manuscripts and Photographs. Manuscript materials are arranged alphabetically by type, and chronologically thereunder.

Acquisition

Accessioned, 2008.

Copyright Status

Duplication of collection materials may be restricted.

Access and Restrictions

Collection is open for research; access restrictions apply. To request collection materials, please contact the Veterans History Project at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/vhp.contact>

Preferred Citation

Emma Delano Pettengill Collection (AFC/2001/001/57842), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

Biographical Note

Emma Delano Pettengill, née Corcoran, was born February 23, 1922, in Lancaster, New York. She attended Hyannis State Teacher's College in Barnstable, Massachusetts, where she met her future husband, Kenneth ("Ken") Herman Pettengill. Four years younger than Emma, Ken was born January 20, 1926, in Milton, Massachusetts.

At the time that they met, Ken was on leave from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he had begun his studies at the age of 16. Just before he turned 18, on January 14, 1944, he enlisted in the United States Navy. The same year, Emma graduated from Hyannis State Teacher's College with her bachelor's degree. She and Ken began writing to each other shortly after he enlisted.

Ken spent most of 1944 training at Naval Station Treasure Island in San Francisco, California. Between 1944 and 1946, he was stationed at Naval Submarine Base New London, Connecticut, and aboard submarines including the USS Spikefish (SS 404) and the USS Runner (SS 476), as well as a submarine tender, the USS Howard Gilmore (AS 16), with campaigns mostly in the Pacific. He achieved the rank of Electronic Technician's Mate, Third Class.

Meanwhile, Emma worked as a teacher in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and spent time with her family in Orleans, Massachusetts. In the spring of 1945, Emma enlisted in the United States Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). After completing training in the Bronx, New York, and Lakehurst, New Jersey, where she briefly had librarian duties, she was sent to Naval Air Station Norfolk, in Virginia, to serve as a meteorologist.

All the while, Emma and Ken continued to exchange letters and phone calls, visiting as frequently as they could. They decided to marry after they were both discharged from the Navy in 1946.

The Pettengills went on raise seven children, supported by Ken's work as an engineer for Emery Industries and Hodag Chemical Company. They lived in Boston, Massachusetts; Cincinnati, Ohio; New Jersey; and Evanston, Illinois. Emma died in 1999; Ken, in 2003.

Their daughter, Claire Pettengill, donated Emma and Ken's letters and other materials regarding their service in the Navy to the Veterans History Project. Their correspondence makes up the bulk of the Emma Delano Pettengill collection.

Scope and Content

Collection includes clippings, correspondence, military papers, printed matter, and photographic prints.

Description of Series

Container

Series

Series I: Manuscripts

Series II: Photographs

Container List

Container	Contents
Series I: Manuscripts	
BOX-FOLDER MSS1757/1	Clippings, undated 1 folder, 1 page MS01: A photocopied newspaper article about William Corcoran being burned while experimenting with phosphorus in an attempt to make matches.
BOX-FOLDER MSS1757/2-3	Correspondence, 1942-1991, undated 2 folders, 339 letters MS02: Letters received by Emma Corcoran. Most of the letters were sent by Kenneth Pettengill, Emma's future husband, as well as family and friends such as her mother, also named Emma Corcoran, her sister Mary Corcoran, friends such as "Crawford", and other suitors. A number of letters were sent to Emma before her service with the WAVES, while she was still at Hyannis State Teacher's College and while she was living in Orleans, Massachusetts, with her family. The majority of the letters from Kenneth date from 1944 onward. They concern his Navy service training and studies regarding radio, his life on the submarine USS Runner (SS 275), leisure activities, planned visits, speculations regarding his and Emma's eventual marriage, Emma's interest in joining the WAVES, news of friends and family, literature, and Kenneth's daily activities. Letter dated 1/18/1946 includes a one dollar bill. Some letters are only partial pages (6/8/1942 - 2/21/1991). The letter dated 2/21/1991 is addressed to "Mother," sent from an unknown author. Also includes a few picture postcards (6/11/1944).
BOX-FOLDER MSS1758/1-7	Correspondence, 1944-1945 7 folders MS02 (continued)
BOX-FOLDER MSS1759/1-7	Correspondence, 1945-1946, 1948, 1954, 1991, undated 7 folders MS02 (continued)
BOX-FOLDER MSS1762/1	Correspondence, undated 1 folder MS02 (continued)
BOX-FOLDER MSS1762/2-7	Correspondence, 1944-1949, undated 5 folders, 170 letters MS03: Letters written by Emma Pettengill, most sent to Kenneth Pettengill, one sent to "Crawford," a family friend of the Corcorans, and two sent to unknown recipients. Includes partial pages of letters (2/1944 to 10/4/1949). Topics include Emma's health, leisure time and visits with friends, summertime in Cape Cod, family news, dating life for both Emma and Ken, Emma's enlistment in the WAVES in February 1945, political news, daily life as a WAVE including her duties as a librarian and a meteorologist, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death in April of 1945, visiting Quonset Point Naval Air Station, and her impressions of Norfolk.

Series I: Manuscripts

Container	Contents
BOX-FOLDER MSS1763/1-2	Correspondence, 1944-1949, undated 2 folders MS03 (continued).
BOX-FOLDER MSS1763/3	Correspondence, 1945-1946, 1949 1 folder, 13 letters MS04: Letters written by Emma's husband Kenneth Pettengill and sent to his mother regarding his Navy service, travels and leisure trips, and Ken's plans to marry Emma. The last letter, dated July 7, 1949, mentions their son, Kenny Junior.
BOX-FOLDER MSS1763/4	Correspondence, 1952-1956, undated 1 folder, 5 letters MS05: Letters received by Emma's husband Kenneth Pettengill, seemingly written by friends and family, including Mr. and Mrs. Donald Marshall, Frank Pettengill, Kit Parker, and Emma and Kenneth's daughter Claire Pettengill. Topics covered include news of family and friend's lives and activities, Frank Pettengill's marriage and assignment to Fort Benning.
BOX-FOLDER MSS1763/5	Correspondence, 1945, undated 1 folder, 3 letters MS06: Three letters, including a letter written to Emma (or "Corky") by Annie Shaw (6/2/1945), an incomplete letter written by Emma's sister Mary to an unidentified recipient, and a letter fragment from an unidentified author to an unidentified recipient. Topics covered include social activities and news from home.
BOX-FOLDER MSS1763/8	Military papers, 1944-1946, undated 1 folder MS07: Photocopies of military papers for Emma and Kenneth, including a Navy Training Course Certificate for Radio Material for Kenneth Pettengill (12/15/1944); orders to proceed home and release from active duty for Emma Corcoran (2/5/1945); enlisted record for Emma Corcoran (5/23/1946); discharge certificates for Emma Corcoran and Kenneth Pettengill (5/23/1946); and a notice of separation for Kenneth Pettengill (undated).
BOX-FOLDER MSS1763/9-10	Printed material, 1944-1945, undated 2 folders MS08: A Massachusetts Department of Public Works Registry of Motor Vehicles operator license for Emma Corcoran (10/2/1944); a New York Telephone Company bill for Emma Corcoran (4/24/1945); a ticket stub for a Cincinnati Bengals football game at Soldier Field (undated); a program for a service at the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Norfolk, Virginia (undated); and a commencement program for Hyannis State Teachers College for the class of 1944.

Series II: Photographs

BOX-FOLDER MSS1763/11	Original photographic print, circa 1944 1 black-and-white photographic print PH01: A portrait of Kenneth Pettengill, wearing his Navy uniform, sitting on a bench next to a harbor, ca. 1944.
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