

Chicago Province Archives of the Society of the Divine Word

Finding Aid - Personnel files collection on Reverend Harold Rigney, SVD (US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002)

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Personnel files collection on Reverend Harold Rigney, SVD

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Summary information

Repository: Chicago Province Archives of the Society of the Divine Word

Title: Personnel files collection on Reverend Harold Rigney, SVD

ID: US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002

Date: 1914 - 1980 (date of creation)

Physical description: 7.75 linear feet, not including numerous artifacts, textiles, and clothing items (21 boxes)

**Dates of creation,
revision and deletion:**

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Reverend Harold Rigney, SVD was, upon his death, considered by his confreres as one of the Society's greatest missionaries. Born on the south side of Chicago, IL on Dec. 18, 1900, he entered St. Mary's Mission House at Techny, IL in 1918. He proclaimed his first vows in 1924 and his final vows in 1929, and was ordained at St. Mary's on April 19, 1930. After ordination, Rigney decided to follow in the footsteps of Fr. Stefan Richarz, SVD (1874-1934)—one of his teachers at St. Mary's—and pursue a career in paleontology. He attended the University of Chicago, graduating with his Ph.D. in paleontology in 1937.

In 1939 Fr. Rigney took his first mission assignment to Accra, Ghana, where he taught geology at Achimota College, and in 1942 was commissioned in the United States Army as a chaplain. He was stationed with the 1260th American Air Force Base Unit in Tunisia, and was discharged in 1946 having attained the rank of captain in the United Chaplain Corps.

Fr. Rigney received a fateful assignment in 1946: rector of Fu Jen Catholic University in Beijing, China. As Chinese communist forces moved into Beijing, Rigney's position became precarious. He was arrested by the Chinese government on July 25, 1951 and imprisoned on charges of espionage. During his imprisonment Rigney was repeatedly subjected to mental and physical torture that would affect him for the rest of his life, and his experiences became the subject of his book **Four Years in a Red Hell** (1956). After years of concerted effort by his family, the global SVD community, and the U.S. government Rigney was released on September 11, 1955.

After recuperating, Fr. Rigney embarked on a nationwide media tour to promote his book and give speeches and lectures on his experiences in communist China, and he remained a passionate advocate of communism until his death. In 1957 he was named regional superior of the SVD Irish-English Region, and from 1959-1964 he served as rector of the SVD's University of San Carlos in Cebu, the Philippines. In 1964 Rigney received a grant to continue the paleontological research on early mammals he had begun in China, and spent the next year at University College London as an honorary research associate. In 1965 he was appointed to teach at Divine Word College in Epworth, IA, and in 1970 was named its president.

He remained there until his retirement in 1975. Fr. Harold Rigney died at Techny on January 16, 1980 at the age of 79.

Scope and content

The Personnel files collection on Reverend Harold Rigney, SVD contains materials pertaining to, and created by, Fr. Rigney before and during his time as a Divine Word Missionary in the United States, Africa, China, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines. It includes correspondence and reports; press releases and news clippings; writings and manuscripts; photographs; clothing and textiles; artifacts and ephemera; and reel-to-reel audio tapes.

Notes

Title notes

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into four series based on provenance of the material: Canonical, PR and Communications, Personal, and Research Files. Series three, Personal, is further arranged into subseries.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published

Series descriptions

Series US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1: Canonical

Creator: Society of the Divine Word. Chicago Province Rigney, Harold

Date: 1918-1990 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials on Fr. Harold Rigney produced and/or retained by the Office of the Provincial Superior, Chicago Province of the Society of the Divine Word, including correspondence, biographical information, and additional documents.

Arrangement:

Arranged chronologically

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.01 | File - Biographical | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.02 | File - Official documents | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.03 | File - Correspondence | 1923-1951 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.04 | File - Correspondence | 1955-1959 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.05 | File - Correspondence | 1960-1969 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.06 | File - Correspondence | 1970-1978 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.07 | File - Correspondence regarding imprisonment | 1952-1956 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.08 | File - *Four Years in a Red Hell* correspondence | 1955-1966 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.09 | File - Military service | 1942-1957 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.10 | File - Press tour and events | 1955-1958 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.11 | File - Jubilee address by Fr. John Donaghy | 1970 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-1-01.12 | File - Ephemera | | | |

Series US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-2: PR and Communications

Date: 1945-1980 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials on Fr. Harold Rigney produced and/or retained by the Department of Public and Media Relations, Chicago Province of the Society of the Divine Word, including correspondence, press releases, and news clippings.

Arrangement:

Arranged chronologically

Publication status:

Published

| File / item list | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-2-01.13 | File - Correspondence | 1955-1975 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-2-01.14 | File - Letters of encouragement | 1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-2-01.15 | File - Press releases | 1955-1980 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-2-02.01 | File - News clippings | 1945-1980 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-2-02.02 | File - Festchrift planning | 1980 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-2-02.03 | File - Photographs | | | |

Series US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3: Personal

Date: 1914 - 1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials produced by or about Fr. Harold Rigney and retained by him or his family, including correspondence; reports and other documents; publications and writings; and photographs, ephemera, and artifacts.

Arrangement:

Further arranged into eight subseries based on topic.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1: Correspondence

Date: 1916 - 1977 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Correspondence to or from Fr. Harold Rigney and his family.

Arrangement:

Arranged by topic and then chronologically.

Publication status:

Published

| File / item list | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.04 | File - General correspondence | 1916-1939 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.05 | File - General correspondence | 1940-1950 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.06 | File - General correspondence | September 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.07 | File - General correspondence | October 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.08 | File - General correspondence | November 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.09 | File - General correspondence | December 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.10 | File - General correspondence | 1956-1960 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-02.11 | File - General correspondence | 1964-1971 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.01 | File - General correspondence | 1972 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.02 | File - General correspondence | 1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.03 | File - Provincial superior correspondence | 1923-1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.04 | File - Chaplaincy correspondence | 1943 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.05 | File - Chaplaincy correspondence | 1944 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.06 | File - Chaplaincy correspondence | 1945 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.07 | File - U.S. government and elected officials correspondence | 1956-1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.08 | File - Correspondence to Rigney family during imprisonment | 1955-1956 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.09 | File - Correspondence to Fr. Rigney during imprisonment | 1951-1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-03.10 | File - Rev. Francis Rigney, OFM correspondence | 1964-1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-04.01 | File - Peter Huengsberg and family correspondence | 1975-1977 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-04.02 | File - Rev. Edgar Oehler, SVD correspondence | 1967-1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-04.03 | File - Rev. Theodore Verhoeven, SVD correspondence | 1968-1970 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-1-04.04 | File - Undated or unfinished correspondence | undated | | |
| Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-2: Education | | | | |
| <u>Date:</u> 1918-1937 (date of creation) | | | | |
| <u>Scope and content:</u> | | | | |

Material relating to the education of Fr. Harold Rigney; it includes report cards and graduation information.

Arrangement:

Arranged chronologically

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-2-04.05 | File - Education | 1918-1937 | | |

Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3: Military

Date: 1942-1946 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials relating to Fr. Harold Rigney's time as a military chaplain; it includes government documents and reports written by Fr. Rigney.

Arrangement:

Arranged by document type, then chronologically.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3-04.06 | File - Military service record | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3-04.07 | File - Military special orders | 1942-1945 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3-04.08 | File - Army chaplain's reports | December 1942-1943 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3-04.09 | File - Army chaplain's reports | 1944 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3-04.10 | File - Army chaplain's reports | 1945-May 1946 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3-04.11 | File - Chaplain newsletters | 1943-1944 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-3-04.12 | File - Sunday Catholic collection fund | 1944 | | |

Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4: Clerical

Date: 1939-1973 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials relating to Fr. Harold Rigney's clerical work and assignments; includes Church documents, reports written by Fr. Rigney, and correspondence.

Arrangement:

Arranged by document type, then chronologically.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.01 | File - Appointments | 1939-1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.02 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University rector's reports | 1947-1948 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.03 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University rector's reports | February 1949- June 1949 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.04 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University rector's reports | July 1949- December 1949 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.05 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University rector's reports | January 1950- July 1950 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.06 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University rector's reports | August 1950- September 1950 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.07 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University rector's reports | October 1950- February 1951 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.08 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University rector's reports [photocopies from SVD Generalate Archives, Rome, Italy] | 1946-1948 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.09 | File - Imprisonment narrative transcript | 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.10 | File - Fu Jen Catholic University | 1956-1968 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-4-05.11 | File - University of San Carlos rector's reports | 1961-1964 | | |

Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5: Writings and speeches

Date: 1914-1973 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials related to Fr. Harold Rigney's published and unpublished writings, lectures, and sermons; it includes manuscripts, published material, correspondence, and ephemera. His scientific writings can be found in the Research files series.

Arrangement:

Arranged by topic, then chronologically.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-05.12 | File - Prison writings and ephemera | 1954-1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-05.13 | File - "Fifty Months in the Prisons of Communist Peking, China" [unbound manuscript] | 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.01 | File - "Fifty Months in the Prisons of Communist Peking, China" [bound manuscript] | 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.02 | File - "Four Years in a Red Hell" series, *Chicago Sun-Times* | 1956 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.03 | File - Milton Caniff illustrations for "Four Years in a Red Hell" series [facsimiles] | 1956 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.04 | File - *Four Years in a Red Hell* copyright | 1956 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.05 | File - Publisher correspondence | 1966-1969 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.06 | File - Articles and short writings | 1963-1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.07 | File - Lecture correspondence | 1964-1972 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.08 | File - General lectures | undated | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.09 | File - Lectures on imprisonment | undated | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.10 | File - Lecture series, "Fossil Evidence for Human Evolution" | 1970 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-06.11 | File - Lecture and celebration programs | 1956-1965 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-07.01 | File - Diaries | 1914-1972 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-08.01 | File - Notebooks, datebooks, and mass records | 1939-1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-09.01 | File - Sermons | 1923-1939 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-09.02 | File - Sermons | 1956-1968 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-09.03 | File - Sermons by topic | 1930-1963 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-09.04 | File - Instructional sermons | 1932-1942 | | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-09.05 | File - Envelope of sermons | 1931-1943 |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-09.06 | File - Genealogical research | undated |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-5-09.07 | File - *Der Rektor von Fu Jen*, by Heinz Theo Risse [manuscript] | undated |

Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-6: Clippings and scrapbooks

Date: 1945 - 1959 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials collected by Fr. Harold Rigney and others on Rigney and his life and work.

Arrangement:

Arranged by document type, then chronologically.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-6-09.08 | File - News clippings | 1945-1959 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-6-09.09 | File - News clippings from Joseph Meegan I | 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-6-09.10 | File - News clippings from Joseph Meegan I | 1955 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-6-10.01 | File - Africa scrapbook | undated | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-6-11.01 | File - China scrapbook | undated | | |

Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-7: Photographs and multimedia

Scope and content:

Visual and audio materials by Fr. Harold Rigney; includes photographs and slides of him, his life, and his work, and reel-to-reel audio tapes of lectures and media appearances.

Arrangement:

Arranged by item type, then by size or content, if applicable.

Publication status:

Published

| File / item list | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|---------------|-----------|
| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-7-12.01 | File - Photographs | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-7-13.01 | File - Photographs | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-7-14.01 | File - Slides | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-7-15.01 | File - Reel-to-reel audio tapes | | | |

Subseries US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8: Artifacts

Scope and content:

Artifacts collected by Fr. Harold Rigney; it includes souvenirs from his time in China, scientific objects and tools, and clothing.

Arrangement:

Arranged by item type.

Publication status:

Published

| File / item list | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------|---------------|-----------|
| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8-16.01 | File - Artifacts | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8-17.01 | File - Artifacts | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8-18.01 | File - Oversize artifacts and ephemera | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8-19.01 | File - Headwear | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8-20.01 | File - Prison uniform | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8-21.01 | File - Vestments | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-3-8-21.02 | File - Banners | | | |

Series US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4: Research files

Date: 1944 - 1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Materials produced by Fr. Harold Rigney as part of his paleontological and geological research; it includes publications, manuscripts, notes, correspondence, and photographs.

Arrangement:

Arranged chronologically; photographs arranged by size or topic, where applicable.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.01 | File - Correspondence | 1944-1972 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.02 | File - Correspondence | 1973-1979 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.03 | File - National Science Foundation grant | 1966-1968 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.04 | File - "The Morphology of the Skull of a Young Galesaurus Planiceps and Related Forms" [dissertation] | 1938 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.05 | File - "The Lower Jaw of Morganucodon" [publication] | 1973 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.06 | File - Paleontological publications | 1963-1974 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.07 | File - "Contributions to the Skull Morphology of a New Primitive Mammal from the Upper Triassic on Yunan, China" [manuscript] | 1965 | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.08 | File - Untitled Morganucodon skull manuscript | undated | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-22.09 | File - Morganucodon manuscripts | 1961, undated | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-23.01 | File - Paleontological photographs | | | |
| US.ILTECPA 001.02.0002-4-23.02 | File - Paleontological sketches | | | |