2-8-2019

Sanders, William Willard "Whitey," b. 1931 (MSS 659)

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Willard Sanders (known as “Bill” or “Whitey”), the son of Romie Covington Sanders and Katherine (Tomerlin) Sanders, was born in Springfield, Tennessee on 14 October 1931. He graduated from Pompano Beach High School in Florida, then attended the University of Miami before accepting a football scholarship at Western Kentucky State College (now WKU). During 1953, Sanders set an NCAA record for completing 66 of his 98 passes as quarterback.

An English major at WKU, Sanders enrolled in a freshman art class with professor Ivan Wilson, who he credited with putting him on his future career path; while still a student, Sanders contributed cartoons to WKU’s student newspaper, The College Heights Herald. Another influence was Gene Graham, a Pulitzer Prize-winning editorialist and cartoonist for the Nashville Tennessean. On 12 February 1955, Sanders married Gene Graham’s niece Joyce Wallace, also a WKU student.

After graduating from WKU in 1955, Sanders was drafted to play professional football, but military service sent him to Korea with the U.S. Army. Put in command of a unit of the military newspaper Stars and Stripes, he contributed cartoons while overseeing printing and distribution. While in Korea, his reading of Herblock’s Here and Now by the legendary cartoonist Herbert Block sparked Sanders’ interest in political cartooning.

After his Army service, Sanders became a reporter with the Pacific Stars and Stripes in Tokyo, then worked as a freelance cartoonist with the Japan Times. In 1959, he accepted a position as cartoonist for the Greensboro Daily News in Greensboro, North Carolina. In June 1963 he became editorial cartoonist for The Kansas City Star, and in September 1967 moved to The Milwaukee Journal. Sanders’ cartoons reflected Journal editorial policy until 1987; thereafter, his work represented his own views rather than the paper’s.

Given considerable freedom to express his strong liberal opinions, Sanders frequently drew ire from newspaper readers, local officials and conservative groups. A proponent of civil rights, civil liberties, gun control, women’s rights, contraception and sex education, he was a harsh critic of the Vietnam War and the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. His treatment of local issues such as public accommodation laws and police misconduct also created conflict with politicians, judges and the public. In February 1970, Sanders received a month-long suspension from The Milwaukee Journal for “moonlighting” when some of his cartoons appeared in a local underground newspaper, a penalty that sparked
debate about political pressure on the *Journal*. However, Sanders was also known for his independence; his views on free speech, for example, led him to criticize 1960s student activists who objected to giving their opponents a forum on university campuses.

Over his career, Sanders’ cartoons were syndicated nationally to more than 100 newspapers, and his work appeared in other nationally known publications such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *The New York Times*; a 1962 cartoon about civil rights was reprinted in the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia*. A jazz musician, popular speaker, and participant in professional organizations, Sanders served as president of the American Association of Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC) and received numerous awards and honors including the Kansas City Civil Liberties Achievement Award (1963) and the Wisconsin Civil Liberties Award (1979). He was inducted into the Wisconsin Media Hall of Fame, the Milwaukee Press Club Hall of Fame, and the WKU Hall of Distinguished Alumni. Collections of his work can be found in *Run for the Oval Room: They Can’t Corner Us There* (Alpha Press, 1974); *The Sanders Book: Selected Political Cartoons by Sanders* (Milwaukee Journal, 1978); and *Adventures in Whopperland: a collection of political cartoons, written opinions and essays* (Lulu, 2006).


**COLLECTION NOTE**

This collection consists of material pertaining to the career of editorial cartoonist Bill “Whitey” Sanders. The three main aspects of the collection are: biographical and feature articles documenting his career (Box 1); correspondence, consisting largely of reader reaction to his editorial cartoons for the *Greensboro Daily News*, *The Kansas City Star* and *The Milwaukee Journal*, as well as other professional correspondence (Boxes 2-5); and miscellaneous material relating to his career, such as his involvement in conferences and professional organizations, awards, appearances and writings (Box 6). WKU’s Department of Library Special Collections also holds a large number of original Sanders cartoons, particulars of which are not included in this collection inventory.

Box 1 contains articles, clippings, interview features and other biographical material about Sanders, often illustrated with his cartoons. In addition to articles and profiles detailing Sanders’ career, of interest are: a 1963 article recounting Sanders’ meeting with President John F. Kennedy (Folder 2); *Editor and Publisher* and *Saturday Review* articles reporting on the hostile reaction, led by the John Birch Society and its sympathizers, to Sanders’ cartoons after he began work at *The Kansas City Star* (Folder 2); and the uproar over Sanders’ 1982 depiction of a police officer that some found obscene (Folder 3; see also Box 4, Folder 2).

Boxes 2-5 contain correspondence, largely from readers but also from colleagues; from collectors, politicians and other public figures, usually to request the original of a cartoon; from organizations seeking to arrange a speech, presentation or exhibit; from publications seeking permission to reprint a cartoon; and from aspiring cartoonists asking for advice. Readers who take time to write generally convey negative comments, but some praise Sanders’ work or offer ideas for cartoons. Negative reactions to Sanders’ depiction of national, state and local topics
range from thoughtful letters to brief expressions of outrage, general insults, and comments written directly on a clipping of the offending cartoon. In a few cases, readers utter extreme expressions of racism, anti-Semitism or apocalyptic thinking. Though infrequent, Sanders’ replies to some readers are also included. Among the items of interest:

- Feedback from several colleagues on a 1962 Sanders article in the *AAEC News* regarding the role of the editorial cartoonist (Box 2, Folder 1)
- Candid letters from former colleagues at the *Greensboro Daily News* regarding personnel at the paper and politics in North Carolina (Box 2, Folders 5-7)
- Passionate declarations from right-wing extremists and a UFO conspiracy theorist (Box 2, Folders 10, 13 and 14)
- Letters and cartoons about controversial Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Christ T. Seraphim, who was a favorite Sanders target and with whom he participated in a 1977 televised debate on capital punishment (Box 2, Folders 10; Box 3, Folder 13; Box 4, Folder 11)
- Reaction to Sanders’ 1970 suspension from the *Milwaukee Journal*, including a supportive note from the *Kaleidoscope*, where his unauthorized work appeared (Box 3, Folder 1)
- Reaction to Sanders’ cartoon of a “trigger-happy” police officer operating under cover of “law and order” (Box 3, Folder 1), and his portrayal of President Richard Nixon’s support of an anti-crime bill as endorsement of a Nazi-style police state (Box 3, Folder 2)
- Letters from organizers and supporters of the early-1970s “women’s liberation” movement (Box 3, Folders 2, 7 and 8; Box 4, Folder 13)
- Reaction to Sanders’ treatment of local issues, including school integration (Box 2, Folder 6), open housing laws (Box 2, Folders 10 and 12), and stadium construction (Box 4, Folder 8)
- A 1976 drawing of Sanders by John Kascht, just beginning his career as a caricature artist (Box 3, Folder 12)
- Reaction to Sanders’ portrayal of President Ronald Reagan and his seeming indifference to poverty and welfare programs, including a cartoon showing victims hanging from an inadequate social “safety net” (Box 4, Folder 2 and 5)
- Letters to Sanders from other well-known cartoonists including Herbert Block “Herblock” (Box 2, Folder 12; Box 5, Folder 1); Pat Oliphant (Box 5, Folder 1); C. D. Batchelor (Box 2, Folder 9; Box 5, Folder 1); Duncan McPherson (Box 3, Folder 9); and Ben Wicks (Box 2, Folder 8)
- Post-retirement Christmas cards and letters from Sanders, mostly to staff of WKU’s Department of Library Special Collections, with cartoons portraying the Sanders family and current political figures.

Box 6 contains miscellaneous material relating to Sanders’ professional career. Folder 1 contains extended correspondence and contracts regarding speaking engagements and conferences (similar, more brief communications also appear throughout Sanders’ correspondence in Boxes 2-4). Folder 2 contains programs and announcements of awards received by Sanders. Folder 3 contains various programs recorded on DVD including features about Sanders’ work, a performance of his band, the Basin St. Saloon Band, and some footage of Sanders playing quarterback while a student at WKU. Folder 4 contains selected banquet and convention programs and membership directories of the AAEC. Folder 5 contains materials
from the 1966 AAEC convention in Kansas City at which Sanders was elected president for the ensuing year and includes invitations to speakers, schedules and the banquet program. Folders 6 and 7 contain Sanders’ articles and associated material describing his experiences and impressions gathered during a USO-sponsored tour of Vietnam and Thailand in 1967, and a 1973 tour of Thailand. Folder 8 contains published articles and book reviews by Sanders, mostly on political subjects and the art of cartooning. Folder 9 contains manuscript writings by Sanders, mostly discussing the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and other aspects of the administration of President Richard Nixon; also included is a book outline. Folders 10 and 11 contain notices and reviews for Sanders’ books, Run for the Oval Room and The Sanders Book. Folder 12 contains miscellaneous manuscript writings and essays, and Folder 13 contains a few printouts from Sanders’ blog. Folder 14 contains photocopies of miscellaneous Sanders cartoons, including a compilation prepared by the Greater Kansas City Civil Liberties Union. The remaining miscellaneous items in this box consist of royalty statements, which also list some of the newspapers in which Sanders cartoons were syndicated (Folder 15); an amicus brief, using a Sanders cartoon as an exhibit, submitted by the AAEC and others in support of a 1986 U.S. Supreme Court case involving Hustler magazine and the Reverend Jerry Falwell (Folder 16); and a directory, with photographs, of Milwaukee Journal staff in 1987 (Folder 17).

SHELF LIST

**BOX 1**

**William “Whitey” Sanders**  
1963-2013  
81 items

Folder 1 Inventory  
1 item

Folder 2 Biographical data, clippings, articles about  
1963-1972  
27 items

Folder 3 Biographical data, clippings, articles about  
1974-1982  
16 items

Folder 4 Biographical data, clippings, articles about  
1983-1987  
15 items

Folder 5 Biographical data, clippings, articles about  
1988-2013  
8 items

Folder 6 Biographical data, clippings, articles about  
n.d.  
14 items

**BOX 2**

**William “Whitey” Sanders**  
1959-1969  
367 items

Folder 1 Correspondence  
1959-1962  
44 items

Folder 2 Correspondence  
Dec.-June 1963  
27 items

Folder 3 Correspondence while at Greensboro Daily News, undated  
n.d.  
2 items

Folder 4 Correspondence  
July-Dec. 1963  
27 items
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<th>Correspondence</th>
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<td>Correspondence while at <em>Kansas City Star</em>, undated</td>
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<td>Sept. 1967-Apr. 1968</td>
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<td>May-Dec. 1968</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan.-Mar. 1969</td>
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<td>14</td>
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**BOX 3**  
William “Whitey” Sanders  
1970-1980  
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<td>Jan.-Mar. 1971</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Apr.-Dec. 1971</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Correspondence – sex education course, Unitarian Church West, Milwaukee</td>
<td>1971-1972</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan.-June 1972</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>July-Dec. 1972</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>1973</td>
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<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td><strong>BOX 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>William “Whitey” Sanders</strong></td>
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<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>24 items</td>
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<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1989-1991</td>
<td>19 items</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Correspondence while at <em>Milwaukee Journal</em> – n.d.</td>
<td>36 items</td>
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<td></td>
<td>General positive &amp; negative, undated</td>
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<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>Correspondence while at <em>Milwaukee Journal</em> – n.d.</td>
<td>19 items</td>
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<td>State and local issues, undated</td>
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<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Correspondence while at <em>Milwaukee Journal</em> – n.d.</td>
<td>22 items</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Reagan</td>
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<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Correspondence while at <em>Milwaukee Journal</em> – n.d.</td>
<td>27 items</td>
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<td>Various topics, undated</td>
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<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>William “Whitey” Sanders</td>
<td>2005-2018, n.d.</td>
<td>36 items</td>
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<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
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<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Christmas cards and letters from Sanders</td>
<td>2005-2018</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>BOX 6</th>
<th>William “Whitey” Sanders</th>
<th>1953-2006</th>
<th>168 items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Conferences, workshops, speeches – Programs, contracts, etc.</td>
<td>1968-1979</td>
<td>23 items</td>
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<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Awards and recognitions – Programs, notices</td>
<td>1967-2003</td>
<td>10 items</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>DVDs of interviews and appearances</td>
<td>1953-1992</td>
<td>13 items</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Association of American Editorial Cartoonists – Miscellaneous programs, publications, membership directories</td>
<td>1963-1995</td>
<td>5 items</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Association of American Editorial Cartoonists – Annual convention</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>18 items</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Vietnam and Thailand tour</td>
<td>1967-1968</td>
<td>9 items</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Thailand tour</td>
<td>1973</td>
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<td>Articles by Sanders</td>
<td>1957-1982, n.d.</td>
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<td>Folder 9</td>
<td>Writings about Nixon administration</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td>Run For the Oval Room – Reviews</td>
<td>1974</td>
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<td>Folder 11</td>
<td>The Sanders Book – Notices, reviews</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<td>Folder 12</td>
<td>Miscellaneous writing by Sanders</td>
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<td>Folder 13</td>
<td>Sanders cartoon/commentary blog</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>Folder 14</td>
<td>Miscellaneous cartoons by Sanders</td>
<td>1959-1979, n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 15</td>
<td>Publishers-Hall Syndicate royalty statements</td>
<td>1968-1974, n.d.</td>
<td>9 items</td>
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Folder 16  Amicus brief for *Hustler Magazine v. Jerry Falwell* with Sanders cartoon as exhibit  1987  1 item

Folder 17  *Milwaukee Journal* staff directory  1979  1 item

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS  SANDERS, William Willard “Whitey,”  1953-2018

659  b. 1931

Correspondence, articles and miscellaneous material documenting the career of newspaper editorial cartoonist Bill “Whitey” Sanders. Includes letters from readers, public figures and fellow cartoonists, video of programs and appearances, and material related to Sanders’ books and his participation in professional organizations.

6 boxes. 69 folders. 1,402 items. Originals, photocopies, DVDs.

2005.161.2; 2008.25.1-12

**SUBJECT ANALYTICS**

Abortion – Relating to  B3,F4,8; B4,F1,2,4,6,7
Agnew, Spiro Theodore, 1918-1996 – Relating to  B2,F12; B3,F1,8; B4,F12
Alcohol – Relating to  B3,F2; B4,F5
Anti-Communism  B2,F4,10,11,13; B3,F1,7; B4,F6
Anti-Semitism  B2,F4,14; B4,F2,4,13
Batchelor, Clarence Daniel, 1888-1977  B2,F9; B5,F1
Block, Herbert Lawrence “Herblock,” 1909-2001  B2,F12; B5,F1
Brooks, Charles G., Sr., 1920-2011  B2,F1
Buckberry, Ray B., Jr., b. 1934  B2,F13
Bush, George Herbert Walker, 1924-2018 – Relating to  B4,F8
Bush, George Walker, b. 1946 – Relating to  B5,F3; B6,F13
Byrd, Harry Flood, Sr., 1887-1966  B2,F1
Carter, James Earl “Jimmy,” b. 1924 – Relating to  B1,F3; B3,F12
Cartoons and cartoonists
Catholic Church – Relating to  B4,F8,12
Citizens’ Councils – Relating to  B2,F13
Civil rights movement – Relating to  B2,F1,14; B3,F13; B6,F9,14
Constitution – United States – Relating to  B6,F16
Contraception – Relating to B2,F12; B3,F4; B4,F5,13
Cooley, Harold Dunbar, 1897-1974 B2,F1,2
Daniel, Charles Rufus, Jr., b. 1929 B2,F2
Daniels, Jonathan Worth, 1902-1981 B2,F6
Davis, Angela Yvonne, b. 1944 – Relating to B3,F6
Diddle, Edgar Allen, 1895-1970 – Relating to B6,F8
Discrimination in housing – Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1967-1969 – Relating to B2,F10,12; B4,F13; B6,F14
Disney, Lillian Marie (Bounds), 1899-1997 B2,F10
Elections and election campaigns, 2008 – Relating to B5,F3
Engeleiter, Susan Shannon, b. 1952 B4,F9
Engeleiter, Susan Shannon, b. 1952 – Relating to B4,F8
Erickson, Louis Bernard “Lou,” 1913-1990 B2,F1
Ervin, Samuel James “Sam,” Jr., 1896-1985 B2,F1
Falwell, Jerry Lamon, Sr., 1933-2007 – Relating to B6,F16
Feminism, 1970-1973 – Relating to B3,F2,7,8,14; B4,F13
Ford, Gerald Rudolph, Jr., 1913-2006 – Relating to B3,F10,14; B4,F12
Frank, Phil, 1943-2007 B3,F1
Freeman, Orville Lothrop, 1918-2003 B2,F1
Fulbright, James William, 1905-1995 B2,F7
Gallup, George Horace, 1901-1984 B5,F1
Goldberg, Arthur Joseph, 1908-1990 – Relating to B6,F8
Goldwater, Barry Morris, 1909-1998 B2,F1,7
Graham, Gene Swann, 1924-1982 – Relating to B3,F7
Gun control – Relating to B2,F9,11; B3,F6,8,14; B4,F1,3,5,9,13
Haynie, Hugh Smith, 1927-1999 B3,F1
Hodges, Luther Hartwell, 1898-1974 B2,F1
Homosexuality – Relating to B4,F3,6
Integration and segregation – Relating to B3,F6,7,9; B4,F1,4,12; B6,F9
Johnson, Lyndon Baines, 1908-1973 B2,F2,12; B3,F1
Johnson, Lyndon Baines, 1908-1973 – Relating to B1,F2; B2,F5-7,9-12,14; B4,F12; B6,F4
Jones, Abe D., Jr., d. 2017 B2,F5,6
Kascht, John B3,F12
Kennedy, John Fitzgerald, 1917-1963 – Relating to B1,F2; B2,F1,2,4,5,9; B5,F3; B6,F12
Kennedy, Robert Francis, 1925-1968 – Relating to B2,F2
Kornegay, Horace Robinson, 1924-2009 – Correspondence B2,F1
Lassie (Fictitious character) – Relating to B2,F10
Lewis, Ross Aubrey, 1902-1977 B2,F1
Lynch, Dan, 1946-2014 B3,F12
Maier, Henry Walter, 1918-1994 – Relating to     B1,F6; B2,F10; B4,F6,11; B6,F14
McLeod, Jack M., 1931-2003                  B4,F8
McNamara, Robert Strange, 1916-2009 – Relating to  B1,F7,8
McPherson, Duncan Ian, 1924-1993            B3,F9
Mikulovsky, John, Jr., b. 1947               B3,F14; B4,F2
Moore, Garry, 1915-1993                      B2,F1
Morse, Wayne A., 1899-1990                   B2,F10
Mullin, Willard, 1902-1978                   B2,F10; B3,F1; B5,F1
Nader, Ralph, b. 1934                        B3,F10
Nelson, Gaylord Anton, 1916-2005             B3,F7
Newspapers – Greensboro Daily News – Greensboro, North Carolina
Newspapers – The Kansas City Star – Kansas City, Missouri
Newspapers – The Milwaukee Journal – Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Nixon, Richard Milhous, 1913-1994            B2,F10; B3,F7
Nixon, Richard Milhous, 1913-1994 – Relating to B2,F1,11,12,14; B3,F1-4,6-10,13; B4,F12; B6,F4,9,14
Obama, Barack Hussein, b. 1961 – Relating to  B5,F3
Oliphant, Patrick Bruce “Pat,” b. 1935       B5,F1
Payne, Eugene Gray “Gene,” 1919-2010          B2,F1
Pierotti, John, 1911-1987                     B2,F1
Police – Relating to                         B1,F3; B2,F11; B3,F1,2,6,14; B4,F2
Political cartoons – United States
Politics – North Carolina, 1959-1964        B2,F5; B6,F14
Pornography – Relating to                    B3,F8; B4,F6; B6,F16
Reagan, Ronald Wilson, 1911-2004 – Relating to B2,F7; B4,F1-7,12; B6,F8
Ritchie, William Norman, 1866-1947 – Relating to B3,F2
Robinson, William Busby “Robbie,” 1908-1969 – Relating to B3,F1
Russell, Bruce Alexander, 1903-1963          B2,F2
Sanders family – Relating to                 B5,F3
Sanders, Joyce Mary (Wallace) – Photographs  B1,F3; B5,F3
Sanders, William Willard “Whitney,” b. 1930 – Photographs  B5,F3
Sanford, James Terry, 1917-1998              B2,F1,7,8
Seeger, Peter “Pete,” 1919-2014               B2,F13
Seraphim, Christ T., 1918-1998 – Relating to  B1,F3,6; B2,F10,12,14; B3,F1,4,13; B4,F11; B6,F9
Sex education – Relating to                  B3,F5,14
Shatner, William, b. 1931                    B4,F10
Smith, Howard Worth, 1883-1976               B2,F2
Smith, Howard Worth, 1883-1976 – Relating to  B2,F1
Starr, Bryan Bartlett “Bart,” b. 1934 – Relating to  B3,F2; B4,F6,13
Stars and Stripes (Newspaper) – Relating to   B2,F1
Student movements, 1968-1970 – Relating to    B2,F10-12; B3,F1,2; B4,F13
Taylor, Robert “Bob,” b. 1932      B2,F1
Television – Relating to  B2,F13; B3,F15; B4,F5,6
Thailand – Travel and description, 1967, 1973      B6,F6,7
Thompson, Sarah (Pearce), 1910-1996    B2,F8
Thurmond, James Strom, Sr., 1902-2003     B2,F1
Tobacco industry – Relating to     B4,F1
Trudeau, Garretson Beekman “Garry,” b. 1948 – Relating to     B3,F11
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972      B6,F5
Unidentified flying objects – Relating to     B2,F10
Vietnam – Travel and description, 1967      B6,F6
Vietnam War, 1961-1975 – Relating to     B2,F7,10,11; B3,F1-3,6,7,14; B4,F12,13; B6,F6,7,9,14
Watergate scandal, 1972-1974 – Relating to     B3,F9; B6,F9
Weaver, John D., 1912-2002      B2,F11,12
Welfare rights movement – Relating to     B3,F6,13; B4,F13
White, Thomas Jackson, Jr., 1903-1991     B2,F2
Whiting, Sadie (Burt), 1893-1966     B2,F1
Whittaker, Charles Evans, 1902-1973     B6,F5
Wicks, Ben, 1926-2000      B2,F8
Wilson, Ivan, 1889-1981      B2,F14

SEE or SEE ALSO

Sanders, Bill, b. 1931
  See:
  Sanders, William Willard

Sanders, “Whitey,” b. 1931
  See:
  Sanders, William Willard

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