

# Guide to the Laird Family Papers

MS 1207



compiled by John Espy

June 1981

Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
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(203) 432-7441  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1207

**CREATOR:** Laird family

**TITLE:** Laird family papers

**DATES:** 1890-1980

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.5 linear feet (4 boxes, 1 folio)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The principal figures in these papers are Thelma Fae Laird, nurse and educator, and her immediate family. Photographs and memorabilia collected during her service in the Navy Nurse Corps during World War II make up the largest part of the papers. Also in the collection are the letters of her father, Allan Max Laird, on Wisconsin politics and of her mother, Sara O'Neil Laird, describing her life as a school teacher in Wisconsin at the turn of the century. The activities of her brother, Joseph M. Laird, and other members of the Laird and O'Neil families are reflected in family correspondence (1901-1954), photographs and memorabilia.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1207>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1207>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.        box  
f.        folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Janet Grant Rudnicki, executrix of Thelma Laird's estate, 1980.

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### Conditions Governing Access

Correspondence and school records in Box 4 are closed until January 1, 2029.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

Laird Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Thelma Fae Laird: nurse; served in Navy Nursing Corps during World War II, and retired with rank of lieutenant commander; director of nursing at Memorial Hospital, Sloan Kettering Institute; on the faculty of University of Southern California at Berkeley; active in the American Cancer Society.

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## Scope and Contents

The chief figure in the Laird Family Papers is Thelma Fae Laird, nurse and educator. The collection most fully documents her service in the Navy Nursing Corps during World War II, mostly in the South Pacific; there are letters to family, photographs, and printed matter and memorabilia from this period. But there are also materials from her school years, her work for the American Nurses' Association (1947-51), and her last academic position at Florence-Darlington Technical Education Center (1972-73). Her papers also contain a long and cordial correspondence with Bernard M. Baruch.

Thelma Laird's wartime letters to her parents make up most of the family correspondence. But the collection does include papers of Thelma's mother, Sara O'Neil Laird, concerning her work as a Wisconsin school teacher at the turn of the century; correspondence of her father, Allan Max Laird, concerning Wisconsin politics, a French lawsuit on behalf of his father's pearl business, and his work as a minister in Elmira, N.Y.; correspondence and obituary clippings concerning her brother, Joseph M. Laird; and other papers and photographs of various members of the Laird and O'Neil families.

There are also two folders of letters written by five servicemen to their families and friends. All were patients at the U.S. Navy Base Mobile Hospital #4 (c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco) in September 1943, when the letters were written; one serviceman mentions being in a malaria ward, while two others were receiving psychiatric treatment. Though the envelopes all have postage, none is postmarked. It is not known why the letters were not sent, or how they came into Thelma Laird's possession. These letters, and transcripts of Thelma Laird's school records, are closed to research for 75 years from the date of their creation.

The papers were given to Yale by Janet Grant Rudnicki, Executrix of Thelma Laird's Estate, in September 1980.

## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1 - 9	Family correspondence	1901, 1906, 1927, 1929, 1942-1945, 1954, undated
Thelma Fae Laird		
b. 1, f. 10	General correspondence	1943-1972, undated
b. 1, f. 11	Correspondence with Bernard M. Baruch	1951-1961, undated
b. 1, f. 12	Correspondence and printed matter, including yearbook, re: Florence-Darlington Technical Education Center, S.C.	1973
b. 1, f. 13	School notes and papers: general	1951, undated
b. 2, f. 14	School papers re: nursing	[1934-1935], undated
b. 2, f. 15	Writings	1945-1953, undated
b. 2, f. 16	Documents: birth certificate (photostat), divorce decree, diplomas, nursing registrations	1908-1972
b. 2, f. 17	Curriculum vitae and printed matter about Thelma Laird, including obituaries	1946-1980
b. 2, f. 18	Printed matter re: American Nurses' Association	1951, 1963, undated
b. 2, f. 19	Printed matter and photographs re: Bernard M. Baruch and the Belle W. Baruch Foundation	1954-1969, undated
b. 2, f. 20	Printed matter from World War II	1943-1945, undated
b. 2, f. 21	Miscellaneous printed matter	1960-1973, undated
b. 2, f. 22	Photographs of Thelma Laird	1945, undated
b. 2, f. 23	Photographs of South Pacific during World War II, with related letter of Winston Churchill, one autographed	1943-1946, undated
b. 2, f. 24	Memorabilia: addresses, calendars, calling cards, navy bar pin	1963-65
b. 2, f. 25	Sara O'Neil Laird: correspondence, letters of introduction, teacher's contracts and certificates	1890-1901, 1918, 1943
b. 2, f. 26	Sara O'Neil Laird [and Thelma Laird?]: notes and memorabilia	1890-1944, undated
Allan Max Laird		

b. 2, f. 27 - 29	Correspondence	1902-1914, 1917-1919
b. 3, f. 30	Correspondence	1920-1926, 1945, 1954
b. 3, f. 31	Letters of recommendation	1898-1904
b. 3, f. 32	Writings	1894, undated
b. 3, f. 33	Business and legal papers, printed memorabilia, silhouette, clippings	1897-1924, 1961, undated
b. 3, f. 34	Joseph M. Laird: correspondence, obituary clippings	1928-1929
b. 3, f. 35	Photographs of Sara O'Neil Laird, Allan M. Laird, and other family members	1938, 1949, 1979, undated
b. 3, f. 36	Correspondence and printed matter re: various family members of the O'Neil and Laird families, and unidentified correspondence	1891-1969. undated
	Restricted material Materials are restricted until January 1, 2029.	
b. 4, f. 37	Thelma Laird: transcripts of grades	1925-1954
b. 4, f. 38 - 39	Letters from patients at U.S.N. Mobile Hospital #4 to their families and friends	1943, undated
	Oversize	
b. 5, f. 40	Thelma Laird: diplomas	1935, 1952
b. 5, f. 41	Photographs: Thelma Laird, South Pacific	undated
b. 5, f. 42	Sara O'Neil Laird: teaching certificates	1895, 1899

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Families  
Nurses  
Women teachers  
World War, 1939-1945

### **Geographic Names**

Wisconsin -- Politics and government

### **Names**

Laird, Allan Max  
Laird, Sara O'Neil  
Laird, Thelma Fae, 1908-1980

### **Families**

Laird family  
O'Neill family