



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Louis S. Nixdorff 1928 Olympic Games Collection

NMAH.AC.0443

Robert S. Harding

1993



Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-3270
Fax Number: Fax: 202-786-2453
archivescenter@si.edu
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	3
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
Series 1: Correspondence, 1926 - 1987	6
Series 2: Diary, 1928-07-10 - 1928-08-15	7
Series 3: Photographs, 1928 - 1928	8
Series 4: Newspaper Clippings and Scrapbook, 1951 - 1951, 1978 - 1978, 1928 - 1928, 1955 - 1955	9
Series 5: Programs, Awards, and Invitations, 1928 - 1928	10

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Louis S. Nixdorff 1928 Olympic Games Collection
Date:	1926 - 1987
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0443
Creator:	Nixdorff, Louis S., 1906-1992 (Olympic athlete) (Creator)
Extent:	1 Cubic foot (3 boxes)
Language:	Collection text is in English.
Summary:	The collection documents Louis S. Nixdorff's participation in the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. He was a member of the University lacrosse team that represented the United States.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the Archives Center by Mrs. Anne Byrd Nixdorff, January 1992.

Separated Materials

An Olympic blazer patch and two lacrosse numbers are in the Division of Community Life (now Division of Cultural and Community Life).

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

George W. Sims Collection (AC0127)

Clyde W. Stauffer Photographic Album (AC0139)

Donald Sultner-Welles Collection (AC0145)

Processing Information

Processed by Robert Harding, archivist and Grace Angle, volunteer, XXXX.

Preferred Citation

Louis S. Nixdorff 1928 Olympic Games Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Louis S. Nixdorff (October 1, 1906-January 23, 1992), a native Baltimorean, spent his life there. He graduated from the Polytechnic Institute in 1924 and from the Johns Hopkins University in 1928 with a degree in business administration. While attending Johns Hopkins he was a member of the University lacrosse team that represented the United States at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. He later became a real estate executive and president of Properties Incorporated in Baltimore. Mr. Nixdorff continued to make real estate appraisals and to manage properties after retirement. He belonged to the Johns Hopkins Club, the Baltimore City Real Estate Brokers Round Table and the Maryland Historical Society. He also was an enthusiastic golfer.

The tremendous interest and excitement generated by lacrosse in Baltimore in 1928 is clear from the press coverage of intercollegiate lacrosse for that year. Stories on important games began at least a day before the event, continued during the day of the game in morning and evening papers and lasted for at least a day afterward.

The process that culminated in the selection of the Johns Hopkins University team to represent the United States in the Olympic games in Amsterdam was a formal one. The lacrosse ladder selected by the Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association to place before the Olympic Committee included ten teams. Of these, six were chosen by the Olympic Lacrosse Committee for national playoffs: the Mount Washington Club, Army, Navy, the University of Maryland, Rutgers and the Johns Hopkins University. In the playoffs the University of Maryland defeated Rutgers 7-2 and Navy 6-2. Hopkins defeated Mt. Washington 6-4 and Army 4-2. In ever-mounting excitement, Hopkins on June 23, 1928, overwhelmed Maryland 6-3. The executive committee of the American Olympics Commission formally ratified this selection of the Johns Hopkins University lacrosse team to represent the United States at the 1928 Olympics. Four members of that team are in the Lacrosse Hall of Fame: C. Gardner Mallonee, John Lang, Tom Biddison, and Bill Logan.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains an oversize scrapbook of newspaper clippings, loose clippings from a Baltimore newspaper Sunday supplements, a diary recorded by Nixdorff, and an album of photographs that Nixdorff took on the Amsterdam visit and several other trips.

The newspaper clippings in an oversize scrapbook follow the fortunes of the Johns Hopkins University lacrosse team, national champions for 1926 and 1927, through its 1928 season, a post-season series, the playoffs to represent the United States at the Olympic Games in the summer of 1928, and the Olympic lacrosse games in Amsterdam. Newspaper clippings years later reminisce about the 1928 lacrosse team at the Olympic games in Amsterdam.

The newspaper clippings recounting various games are seldom identified and most of the articles are not dated. Some are from the Baltimore Post, later taken over by the News and were written by Yale Merrill. Others are from the Sunpapers, morning and evening. Some carry an Associated Press identification. Many of the accounts of the 1928 intercollegiate season prior to the Olympic Games were written by W. Wilson Wingate. Some of the news clippings are incomplete.

The trip of the 268 Olympic athletes to Amsterdam on the *S.S. President Roosevelt* is described graphically by Louis S. Nixdorff in his diary. The diary transcript included later in this Register has been transcribed exactly as written by the author, regardless of omissions of obvious words or occasional misspellings. The diary entries relating to the voyage clearly depict the boredom of the long voyage for young athletes eager to get to Amsterdam and compete

in the Olympics. Training was continued during the trip insofar as it was possible on shipboard. Training and meals represented welcome relief from the monotony of the journey.

The diary is written in a clear hand in a soft-cover, lined notebook. Nixdorff presumably purchased it specifically to put his thoughts and observations down on this exciting and, to him, historic trip. The diary covers the period from the departure of the lacrosse team from the Baltimore and Ohio railroad station in Baltimore for New York on July 10, 1928, to the departure from Cherbourg for home on August 15, 1928. It includes Mr. Nixdorff's accounts of shipboard life, the game against the Canadians that the Americans won and their loss to the English team on the following day. England's subsequent loss to Canada meant that each team had a win and a loss. No team was declared a victor. The diary also covers a one-week stay in Paris, including a trip to the nearby World War I battlefields.

The collection contains snapshots that Nixdorff took on the *S.S. President Roosevelt* en route to Amsterdam, and images of Olympic events and of sightseeing in and around Amsterdam and Paris. These photographs mounted in an album portray an individual's effort to document his travels in a meaningful way.

Other material in the collection includes copies of three reminiscent articles published in the Baltimore Sun magazine section on April 5, 1951, June 26, 1955, and April 23, 1978; photogravure pictures of a Hopkins University of Virginia game and a Hopkins-University of Maryland game without attribution or date; Mr. Nixdorff's visa for France; Gen. Douglas MacArthur's report on the ninth Olympiad to the president of the United States; the official program for August 5, 1928; the passenger list for the *S.S. President Roosevelt's* return to New York; a cloth Olympic blazer patch; and two cloth lacrosse numbers.

This collection represents a contribution to both sports history and the history of the Olympics. The collection complements several Archives Center photographic collections, emphasizing international travel and touring by an American between the two World Wars.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into five series.

Series 1: Correspondence, 1926-1987

Series 2: Diary, 1928

Series 3: Photographs, 1928

Series 4: Newspaper clippings/Scrapbook, 1928, 1951, 1955, 1978

Series 5: Programs, Awards, Invitations, 1928

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Olympics
- Photographers (amateur)
- Sailing
- Sports
- Travel
- Travel photography -- 1910-1950

Types of Materials:

- Clippings

Diaries -- 20th century
Photographs -- 20th century
Postcards

Names:

Anderson, Harry
Baltimore Sun
Biddison, Tom
Eagan, James
Fairinholt, Larkin
Hamm, Ed
Helfrich, George
Johns Hopkins University
Kegan, Bill
Lang, John
Logan, William
MacArthur, Douglas, 1880-1964
Mallonee, C. Gardner
McKim, Josephine
Meany, Helen
Merrill, Vale
Nice, Deely
Olympic Games (9th : 1928 : Amsterdam, Netherlands)
Owens, Helen
Properties Incorporated
Ray, Joie
Robinson, Elizabeth (Babe)
Schwarz, Bill
Weismuller, Johnny
Wingate, W. Wilson

Places:

Amsterdam (Netherlands)
Cherbourg (France)
Chesapeake Bay
Europe -- description and travel -- 1910-1950
Fontainebleau (France)
Marken (Holland)
Mohawk Trail
New York (N.Y.)
Paris (France)
Québec (Québec)
Reims (France)
Scheueningue (Holland)
St. Lawrence River
Switzerland
Thousand Islands
Virginia Beach
Volendam (Holland)

Preferred Titles:

S.S. President Roosevelt (ship)

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1926 - 1987

Box 2, Folder 5	Postcards to Lou and Anne Byrd Nixdorff, Atlantic City, 1926 - 1927
Box 2, Folder 5	Young's million dollar pier, Atlantic City, New Jersey
Box 2, Folder 5	New Belmont Golf & Country Club, Warwick, Bermuda
Box 2, Folder 5	Kassan, Alaska
Box 2, Folder 5	Odeonsplatz, Munich
Box 2, Folder 5	Berkeley Hills from Buena Vista Park, San Francisco, Cal
Box 2, Folder 5	Card and newsclipping from Bill Schwarz, regarding Williamsburg Landing, 1987-03-07 - 1987-03-07
Box 2, Folder 5	Souvenir postcards: Mohawk Trail
Box 2, Folder 5	Thousand Islands - St. Lawrence River
Box 2, Folder 5	Virginia Beach

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Diary, 1928-07-10 - 1928-08-15

Box 1, Folder 1

Louis S. Nixdorff Diary, 1928-07-10 - 1928-08-15

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Photographs, 1928 - 1928

Box 3, Folder 1	Nixdorff's Photograph Album, 1928 - 1928, circa 1926-1927 Notes: Includes photoprints of 1928 Olympic trip, including several side trips in Europe; Chesapeake Bay ; parks in New England; and Lou's sister, Helen Owens
Box 3, Folder 1	Travel Cards of European locations Notes: Amsterdam, Fontainebleau, Gotthard, Lucerne, Marken, Quebec City, Reims, Scheveningen, Versailles, Volendam
Box 1, Folder 2-3	Photocopies of album
Box 1, Folder 4	Photoprint of game with Canada, Lou Nixdorff on left
Box 1, Folder 4	Johns Hopkins Lacrosse Team, 1928 - 1928
Box 1, Folder 4	#1 Lou Nixdorff, first row, second from right
Box 1, Folder 4	#2 Lou Nixdorff second from left
Box 1, Folder 5	Six photoprints

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Newspaper Clippings and Scrapbook, 1951 - 1951, 1978 - 1978, 1928 - 1928, 1955 - 1955

Box 2, Folder 1	Scrapbook and copies of newspaper clippings of lacrosse games prior to and during 1928 Olympics, 1928 - 1928
Box 2, Folder 1	Schedule of events at 1928 games, 1928 - 1928
Box 2, Folder 1	Invitation to dinner in New York for the Johns Hopkins lacrosse team, 1928-07-10 - 1928-07-10
Box 2, Folder 2	News and magazine clippings, 1978 April 23, 1955 June 26, 1951 August 5
Box 2, Folder 2	Photogravure pictures of Hopkins-Maryland and Hopkins-Virginia games, Lou Nixdorff on right, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Page from an issue of the Phi Gamma Delta Magazine with photographs of five Olympic athletes, including Louis S. Nixdorff, third from left, and assistant coach "Father Bill" Schmeisser, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Page from Phi Gamma Delta Magazine with photographs of George Helfrich, Louis Nixdorff, and Larkin Fairinholt, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Programs, Awards, and Invitations, 1928 - 1928

Box 2, Folder 3	Program for Ninth Olympiad including list of cabin passengers on homeward-bound S.S. President Roosevelt, 1928 August 05
Box 2, Folder 3	Report on the ninth olympiad by the President of the American Olympic Committee, Douglas MacArthur
Box 2, Folder 3	Louis S. Nixdorff visa for France
Box 2, Folder 4	Miscellaneous: Logo of United States Lines
Box 2, Folder 4	Logo of Olympic shield
Box 2, Folder 4	Toast to the Olympiad in Dutch
Box 2, Folder 4	Invitation to a dinner given by the city of Baltimore and the Johns Hopkins University for the lacrosse team, 1928 October 6

[Return to Table of Contents](#)