
Henry Lawton Midkiff Papers

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California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Henry Lawton Midkiff Papers

Dates: 1944-1989

Collection Number: MS 694

Creator/Collector: Midkiff, Henry L.

Extent: 1 half- box + 1 oversize box

Repository: California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives
Sacramento, California 95814

Abstract: Includes material documenting the career of Southern Pacific locomotive engineer Henry L. Midkiff.

Language of Material: English

Access

This collection is open for research at our off-site storage facility with one week's notice. Contact Library & Archives staff to arrange for access.

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Preferred Citation

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Acquisition Information

Donation of Michael and Patricia Midkiff Schmid, 2007

Biography/Administrative History

Henry L. Midkiff worked for the Southern Pacific for forty-five years. Born in Virginia on September 11, 1918, Mr. Midkiff came to California and began his career at Southern Pacific as a carpenter's helper in Marysville, California in 1936. He married in 1941. Four years of army service followed during which he won a Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal. He was promoted to locomotive engineer by Southern Pacific on August 25, 1944. Working out of Roseville, Midkiff operated steam and diesel locomotives. In 1981 he had the honor of bringing SP steam locomotive No. 4449 to Sacramento to celebrate the opening of the California State Railroad Museum. The run coincided with Midkiff's normal work shift on the last day of his 45 years with the SP. A member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers for 40 years, he served as the Secretary-Treasurer of Division 415, Chaplain, Chief Engineer, Local Chairman and Division President. He was a member of the Masons, the Shriners, and the Elks. Henry and his wife Eleanor, had a son, Michael, and two daughters, Susan and Patricia. H. L. Midkiff passed away on August 2, 1995 in Placer County at age 76.

Scope and Content of Collection

Includes a scrapbook containing approximately 75 black-and-white and color photographs of locomotive engineer Henry Midkiff's last run: to bring Southern Pacific steam locomotive No. 4449 from Dunsmuir to Sacramento for display at Railfair '81. Scrapbook includes interior and exterior photographs of the 4449, Southern Pacific employees, friends, photographs taken at Midkiff's retirement, and family photographs. Clippings about his last run and retirement, as well as retirement congratulatory cards are also in the scrapbook. There is a letter from Robert Duncan Krebs, Vice President of Operations for the Southern Pacific Transportation Company, thanking Mr. Midkiff for his contributions to the success of the company. In addition to the scrapbook, there are folders containing his promotion to locomotive engineer certificate, two certificates qualifying him to operate diesel locomotives (1950, 1951), train orders issued between April 20 and April 26, 1981 on his final run, six of his engineer's trip log books from 1946, news clippings, and study materials for the diesel-electric locomotive operating exam, and a certificate from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers documenting 40 years of membership. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.