

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞  
for Special Collections  
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ **Helen Rahrig Papers, 1917-1979** ◀

MSS-115

**Size:** 1/2 in.

**Provenance:** The Helen Rahrig papers were donated by Fred J. Folger in January of 1996.

**Access:** open

**Collection Summary:** Collection consists of memoranda, newspaper articles, and photographs relating to Frederick Thompson's career as the General Traffic Manager at Willys-Overland Company from 1917 to the 1930s.

**Subjects:** [Business and Commerce](#)

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**Completed by:** Karla J. Murphy, October 1996

**Reformatted by:** Arjun Sabharwal, July 2010; last updated: June 2014

**Helen Rahrig  
Papers, 1917-1979**

**Introduction**

The Helen Rahrig Papers include two memos, two newspaper articles from The Blade, and two photographs. All of the materials in this collection were donated by Helen Rahrig, daughter of Frederick H. Thompson, who was at one time the General Traffic Manager of the Willys-Overland Company. The main focus of these documents is on Frederick H. Thompson and his position as the General Traffic Manager with the Willys-Overland Company.

Those people interested in the study of the Willys-Overland Company and how it became the Jeep Corporation would benefit from these papers.

**Biographical Sketch**

Frederick H. Thompson was born in Philadelphia (?), Pennsylvania on October 24, 1872. He moved to Detroit in 1890 where he was a Civil Engineer. He soon began work in the traffic department of the New York Central Railroad and remained employed there until April of 1917 when the Willys-Overland Company called him to work in Toledo, Ohio, as the assistant to Ralph Caples.

In 1892, Thompson met and married Florence Alton, who was a secretary at Grand Trunk Railroad. They had five children: Charles (1894-?), Fred, Jr. (1896-?), Helen (1904-), a girl in 1907, and a boy in 1908.

The call from Willys-Overland promoted Thompson to the position of General Traffic Manager and gave him jurisdiction over traffic matters in a total of six Willys-Overland plants. In the early stages of his tenure with Willys-Overland, Thompson was responsible for many assignments having to do with World War I. Later in his career Thompson was to write an article for the Toledo Chamber of Commerce, as well as to be interviewed by Toledo's Business in June of 1931.

After Thompson retired from Willys-Overland, he remained in Toledo until he died on September 26, 1945.

**Scope and Content**

Helen Rahrig's papers, while sporadic and small in both scope and content, reflect her interest in and admiration for her father Frederick H. Thompson, as well as the company now known as the Jeep Corporation.

The collection begins with a photographed copy of a memo from R. C. Caples which names Mr. F. H. Thompson, Rahrig's father, as the General Traffic Manager of the Willys-Overland Company. Also included are: a piece of correspondence demarcating a few of Helen Rahrig's own remembrances and two photographs of various men who worked with Thompson. The collection concludes with articles from The Blade which address the razing and subsequent selling of merchandise from the building which once was the headquarters for Willys-Overland.

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**Folder List**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
1	1	Correspondence, 1917, 1992
1	2	Newspaper Clippings, 1979
1	3	Photographs, [1917]