SUMMARY INFORMATION

Title: Robert “Bob” W. Smith Collection
Dates: 1936-1942 and undated
Accession #: 2006-071
Collector: Smith, Robert “Bob” W., 1912-1994
Physical Description: .42 linear feet (1 box); 1 shadow box display case
Languages: Collection material in Japanese and English.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition:
The Bob W. Smith Collection was donated to Special Collections and Archives by John L. Plyler, Jr. in accessions 2006-071, 2009-021, and 2011-056. Items from these accessions were combined into one collection in 2011.

Custodial History:
John L. Plyler, future Furman President, and Bob W. Smith both served on the Furman faculty during the 1930s. Mr. Plyler’s sons became acquainted with Bob Smith, and when Smith was in the Navy from 1942 – 1945, he sent numerous “captured” items to Plyler’s sons.

Biographical Sketch:
Robert “Bob” Williams Smith was the son of Eugene W. and Hattie Griffin Smith of Cartersville, Georgia. Smith attended Furman University and graduated in 1934 with a B.S. in Economics. While Smith was at Furman he was a star halfback on the football squad, played third base and outfield on the baseball team and also lettered three years in basketball. After graduation Smith was named Furman’s head basketball coach and backfield coach for football.

Smith entered the U.S. Navy in April 1942 and was connected with the Navy Physical Training Program, coaching teams at Jacksonville, Seattle and in Hawaii.

Smith was discharged from the Navy in November, 1945 and returned to Furman, where he served as Head Coach and Athletic Director until 1947. Smith operated a baseball bat company
for two years, then in 1950 joined the football coaching staff at Clemson Agricultural College, (Clemson University, 1964) and served as defensive line coach, head defensive coach, baseball coach, manager of athletic facilities, and assistant to the athletic director. After retiring in 1969, Smith managed Littlejohn Coliseum and continued improvement to Clemson athletic facilities.

Bob Smith died on September 5, 1994.

Smith was married to another Furman graduate, Catherine Jordan Smith (Class of 1938), who was Clemson’s first female Mayor, as well as a former member of the Clemson City Council. The couple had three children.

**USING THE COLLECTION**

**Access Restrictions:** None.

**Preferred Citation:** [Identification of item], Robert “Bob” W. Smith Collection, [Folder #], Special Collections and Archives, Furman University, Greenville, S.C.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The Robert “Bob” W. Smith Collection contains items “captured” during WWII, including writings in Japanese, black & white photographs, Japanese coins and currency, a Chinese bill, and postcards.

There is also a letter to Mr. Smith from a Ginger Danton regarding the identification of the Japanese writings, the currency and the flags. Ms. Danton indicates that the writings are letters from a Japanese soldier’s family in Manchuria [in China, invaded by Japan in 1931], and that one of the letters was written to an Imperial Marine from a girl whom he met in China while doing duty there in 1938. The photographs depict what appears to be a funeral with a Japanese family in traditional dress. The postcards and photographs are stamped on the back with “Examined in the Field.”

**ARRANGEMENT**

This collection is arranged alphabetically by format.

**Separated Material:**

A large shadow box display case containing a WWII-era hinomaru (Japanese national flag), sash belt possibly worn by a Japanese marine, wooden dog tag, Japanese marine patch, and small Japanese sunburst flag, is stored in the Art Storage Room.
COLLECTION INVENTORY

Box

Folder

1. Currency, Chinese
   a. One Yuan bill, Chinese 1936. Features Sun Yat-Sen, known as the father of modern China, on the front. Back-left is a profile of Sun Yat-Sen. Back-right is the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the largest hall inside the Forbidden City, now officially known as the Palace Museum. A new currency that came into being during the 1930s due to the activities of the invading Japanese, this bill was issued by the Central Bank of China, one of four major government controlled banks.

2. Currency, Japanese
   a. (14) 50 Sen bill, Japan 1942. The front features the chrysanthemum crest at top center, the Imperial Crest of the Emperor; cherry blossoms, and the Yasukuni Shrine. The shrine, dedicated to spirits of dead Japanese soldiers, took on great symbolic importance during and after World War II. The back of the note features a mountain range.
   b. (49) 50 Sen bill, Japan 1938. The front features Mt. Fujiyama, cherry blossoms, and at top center, the chrysanthemum crest, the Imperial Crest of the Emperor.
   c. Two (2) aluminum 10 sen coins, Japan, dated year 17 of the reign of Emperor Hirohito (1942). The coins feature a chrysanthemum crest (Imperial Crest of the Emperor) with paulownia foliage on one side and a double petal cherry blossom on the other.

3. Photographs
4. Postcards, Japanese (11)
5. Writings in Japanese (4)
6. Letter from Ginger Denton to Mr. Smith, undated