



Finding Aid for

WILLIS FRANKLYN WARD PAPERS, 1941-1955

Accession 64.167.527

Finding Aid Revised: February 2017



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20900 Oakwood Boulevard · Dearborn, MI 48124-5029 USA
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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
The Henry Ford
20900 Oakwood Blvd
Dearborn, MI 48124-5029
www.thehenryford.org
research.center@thehenryford.org

ACCESSION NUMBER: 64.167.527

CREATOR: Ward, Willis F. (Willis Franklyn), 1912-1983

TITLE: Willis Franklyn Ward Papers

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1941-1955

QUANTITY: 1 folder

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English

ABSTRACT: Willis Franklyn Ward served as a supervisor of racial integration at Ford Motor Company in the 1930s and later became an assistant United States attorney and Wayne County judge. His papers include correspondence concerning discrimination at Ford Motor Company and requests for release from the military during World War II.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- ACCESS RESTRICTIONS:** The collection is open for research
- COPYRIGHT:** Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).
- ACQUISITION:** Ford Motor Company donation, 1964.
- RELATED MATERIAL:** Related material held by The Henry Ford:
- Flyer, "Big Celebration in Inkster, July 4, 1940", Object ID 64.167.55.4
 - Photograph, "Jesse Owens and Willis Ward, Ford Motor Company, November 23, 1942", Object ID P.833.77213.4
 - Photograph, "Willis Franklyn Ward, circa 1950", Object ID P.O.2642
- Related collections beyond The Henry Ford:
- Willis F. Ward Papers, 1935-1983. Library of Congress
 - Willis F. Ward Papers, 1935-1983. Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library
- PREFERRED CITATION:** Item, folder, box, accession 64.167.527, Willis Franklyn Ward Papers, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford
- PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Collection processed by Ford Motor Company Archives staff, April 1964.
- DESCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Original collection inventory list prepared and published by Ford Motor Company Archives staff in April 1964.
- Finding aid prepared by Elyssa Bisoski, November 2011, and published in November 2011. Revised by Brian Wilson, February 2017, to include related materials and full accession number.
- Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACs) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

After graduating from the University of Michigan, where he was an All-American football player and track star, Willis Franklyn Ward joined the Ford Motor Company in 1935 as supervisor of racial integration. Ward went on to become an assistant United States attorney, was appointed to the Michigan Public Service Commission, and was appointed a Wayne County, Michigan Probate Court judge.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Willis Franklyn Ward papers contain two letters regarding Ford Motor Company's request to release Ward from military service during World War II and three letters regarding African-American employment at Ford Motor Company.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Ward, Willis F. (Willis Franklyn), 1912-1983

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Ford Motor Company

University of Michigan

Subjects

Ford Motor Company--Employees

African American automobile industry workers

Military discharge

CONTAINER LIST

Box no.	Description
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Folder 1

- Letter from Willis Ward (assistant U. S. attorney) to Owen Bombard containing a letter addressed to Edsel Ford, wherein an African American citizen lodged a complaint on hiring policies of Willow Run, June 28, 1955
- Letter from Herbert W. Francois, President of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Ypsilanti branch to Edsel Ford asking for an investigation of reports of discrimination at the Willow Run Bomber Plant, April 22, 1942
- Copy of letter from Donald J. Marshall to Willis Ward about pressures on employers to hire African American workmen, July 5, 1941
- Letter from T. W. Boyd of the local selective service board #2 to Corporal Willis Ward suggesting he send a personal request for release to accompany affidavits already on file in the office of the Undersecretary of War, October 9, 1941
- Letter from T. W. Boyd to Major Mann concerning the release of Corporal Willis Ward due to his position in the defense industry, October 9, 1941