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## Chelf, Owen Ross, 1918-1997 (MSS 151)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
Department of Library Special Collections  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 151 CHELF, Owen Ross, 1918-1997**

½ box. 7 folders. 114 items. 1932-2003. Originals, photocopies, photographs.

2003.101.1

Owen Ross Chelf was born on 28 November 1918 in Bradfordsville (Marion County), Kentucky, the youngest of seven sons of William Milton Chelf and Ora Lena (Crawford) Chelf.

His father, William Chelf, went into the lumber business, but died in an accident when Owen was six. Owen's mother, Ora, machine-quilted to support herself and the family. Owen developed an interest in hunting and fishing as a child, and learned taxidermy skills while in high school. Soon after graduating from Lebanon High School in 1937, Owen married his classmate Rachel Crews. Also native of Marion County, Rachel was born on 3 July 1918. After Owen's military service during World War II (in which his unit, stationed in Germany, was responsible for German prisoners of war after the Battle of the Bulge), the couple lived in Louisville, Kentucky, where Owen worked as a millwright. They adopted four children, three girls and one boy.

After Owen's retirement, the couple moved back to Lebanon and Owen became an avid fisherman. He was responsible for ensuring that Kentucky stocked muskie fish in the state's waters, and invented the Rapid Retriever for fishermen and a sculling paddle. He and Rachel were members of the Kentucky Silver Muskie Club and worked on the newsletter *Muskie Line* for several years.

Rachel died on 31 December 1993, and Owen on 31 January 1997.

**COLLECTION NOTE**

This collection consists of papers of Owen Ross Chelf relating chiefly to his World War II Army service and to his interest in muskie fishing. Included are military papers, letters and photographs. A fuller biographical sketch of Chelf, written by his niece Betty Chelf Coles, is in Folder 1.

**SHELF LIST**

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Chelf, Owen R.</b>	<b>1932-2003</b>	<b>114 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory and biographical data	2003	2 items

Folder 2	Letters, high school diploma, marriage certificate, etc.	1934-1994	13 items
Folder 3	World War II letters to wife Rachel, mother and others	1944-1946	25 items
Folder 4	World War II official papers and mementos	1944-1946; n.d.	22 items
Folder 5	Fishing materials	1952-1997	14 items
Folder 6	Photographs	1932;1944-1946; 1956	32 items
Folder 7	Obituaries and sheets from funeral home memorial books for Owen and Rachel	1994-1997	6 items

### ***BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD***

MSS CHELF, Owen Ross, 1932-2003  
151 1918-1997

Papers of Chelf, a native of Lebanon, Kentucky, with most of the collection focusing on his World War II Army service in Europe and his avid interest in muskie fishing.

½ box. 7 folders. 114 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs.  
2003.101.1

### ***SUBJECT ANALYTICS***

Certificates – Marriage, 1938 B1,F2  
Chelf, Betty Carol, 1931-2014 – Photographs B1,F6  
Chelf, Clarence Crawford, 1908-1994 – Relating to B1,F2-3  
Chelf, Frank Leslie, 1907-1982 – Comments about, 1945 B1,F3  
Chelf, Frank Leslie, 1907-1982 – Photographs, 1956 B1,F6  
Chelf, Owen Ross, 1918-1997  
Chelf, Owen Ross, 1918-1997 – Photographs B1,F6  
Chelf, Rachel (Crews), 1918-1993 B1,F1-3,5-7  
Chelf, Rachel (Crews), 1918-1993 – Photographs B1,F6  
Fishing, 1945-1997 B1,F3-5

Hitler, Adolf, 1889-1945 – Postage stamps, 1945      B1,F3  
 Muskellunge – Fishing      B1,F3-5  
 Russia – Comments about, 1946      B1,F3  
 Switzerland – Travel and description, 1945      B1,F3  
 Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972 – Certificate – Veterans, n.d.      B1,F4  
 Weddings, 1977      B1,F2  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Campaigns, battles, military actions – France – Ardennes  
     and Alsace, 1944-1945 – Comments about, 1945      B1,F3  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Campaigns, battles, military actions – Germany – Aachen –  
     Comments about, 1945      B1,F3  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Europe, 1944-1946      B1,F3  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Europe – Attitudes toward, 1945      B1,F3  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Europe – Military life, 1945-1946      B1,F3-4  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Europe – Souvenirs, 1945-1946      B1,F3-4  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Germany – Hospitals, 1945      B1,F3  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Great Britain – Comments about, 1946      B1,F3  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Money – France      B1,F4  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Money – Germany      B1,F4  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Prisoners and prisons – Comments about, 1945      B1,F3  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Soldiers – Photographs, 1945      B1,F6  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Soldiers from – Marion County, 1944-1946  
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Veterans – Certificates, n.d.      B1,F4

***SEE and SEE ALSO***

Coles, Betty Carol (Chelf), 1931-2014

See:

Chelf, Betty Carol

Muskies (Fish)

See:

Muskellunge

Jeffrey 09/19/2013