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Western Kentucky University Manuscripts & Folklife Archives – World War I Collections



This is a list of collections in the [Manuscripts & Folklife Archives](#) holdings of WKU's [Department of Library Special Collections](#) that relate to World War I. Included are letters of soldiers and civilians, military records and papers, research projects, photographs, scrapbooks and other, mostly unpublished material. Our collections are particularly strong in documenting the experiences of Kentuckians at home and overseas, and of others who found themselves in Kentucky (most notably, at [Camp Zachary Taylor](#), the Army training facility in Louisville) during the war and its immediate aftermath.

Below is an alphabetical list of the collections and a brief description of the World War I elements of each. Clicking on the collection name will link you to [TopSCHOLAR](#)[®], WKU's online digital repository, where you can download a detailed finding aid for the collection and, in some cases, view materials in the collection. For further information, e-mail mssfa@wku.edu.

To broaden your research to include sources such as published material, additional photographs, broadsides, etc., search [KenCat](#), the [Kentucky Library Research Collections](#) catalog.

[Alexander, Fay S., 1896-1972](#)

A soldier at Camp Zachary Taylor writes to his parents in Ohio of a measles quarantine, his diet, drills, mail call, and the spirited arguments of his comrades.

[Alvis, Elizabeth Duncan \(Stark\), 1876-1959](#)

Honorable discharge certificate of Richard C. Stark, issued at Camp Zachary Taylor.

[Anderson, Catherine \(Simmons\), d. 2008 - Collector](#)

While training at Camp Zachary Taylor and in Ohio and Virginia, J. Preston Cherry of Butler County, Kentucky receives letters from his anxious family that mention food conservation, influenza, farm life and other news of the home front.

[Barr, Edward Wallace, 1887-1962](#)

Bowling Green, Kentucky native Barr's record and appointment books document his training and service with the U.S. Army Dental Corps and the clinical status of General John J. Pershing.

[Read more](#)

[Barret Family Papers](#)

Captain Barret Monfort's military papers include his officer's record book and appointment certificate and his letters from France, where he speculates on the "big push" that will end the war, then describes the Armistice celebrations in Paris.

[Belz, Elmore F., 1892-1918](#)

This Dayton, Kentucky soldier writes of his training and duties at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville. His last letter is dated only two days before his death from influenza.

[Bristow, James Ernest, 1898-1976](#)

Sergeant's appointment certificate, discharge and disability allowance papers for this Owensboro, Kentucky native.

[Brown, Archie L., 1898-1989](#)

Serving in France, a soldier writes briefly to his father early in 1919 of the cold weather and a missing Christmas package.

[Brown Family Papers](#)

A memorial card and chaplain's report to his family document death and burial of Johnie Brown of Breckinridge County, Kentucky, while serving in France in 1919.

[Brown, Murray, 1894-1980](#)

A 1918 order inducting Brown into military service at Hardinsburg, Kentucky.

[Buckner, Howard Chandler, 1896-1960](#)

Bucker's letter to his parents in Robertson County, Kentucky describes his living conditions as he awaits repatriation from St. Mihiel, France.

[Buckner, Howard Chandler, 1896-1960](#)

Military record, identification and discharge papers of Buckner, and his notebook kept during training.

[Calvert-Obenchain-Younglove Collection](#)

A soldier's letters and lively "camp notes" describe his training and travels in England as he impatiently awaits deployment to France.

[Carpenter Collection](#)

Writing to Mildred Tucker in Bowling Green, Kentucky, a soldier describes his voyage overseas and his surroundings in England; another writes from France on a series of picture postcards of his sightseeing after the war.

[Chatten, Lily Waller](#)

Kentucky native Chatten's 1918 poem, "America's Answer to Flanders Fields," dedicated to all who served in the war.

[Cohron, Emery Claude, 1894-1918](#)

A report on the death and burial of this Ohio County, Kentucky native, killed in action in France.

[Coombs Family Collection](#)

Friends and family members write to Elizabeth Coombs during their military service; one correspondent details the rigors of his training in Arkansas and his assignment at the American Embassy in Rome, Italy.

[Crume, Charles Thomas, Jr., 1933-1996](#)

Papers of Charles T. and Samuel Crume of Bardstown, Kentucky document their induction into military service; also includes postwar thanks from General John J. Pershing and a list of Nelson County, Kentucky veterans.

[Crump, Malcolm Hart, 1849-1925](#)

A pamphlet of the Universal Military Training League, "Our Nation in Danger," touts the benefits of preparedness for war.

[Davis, Virginia Wood, 1919-1990](#)

A seaman writes of his duties in France on board the USS W. T. James.

[Denhardt, Henry Herman, 1876-1937](#)

Papers relating to Bowling Green, Kentucky native Denhardt's service include instructional material on field gunnery from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and equipment lists, orders and regulations issued during his command of troops being shipped to England and then France. Denhardt also made an assessment of postwar conditions in France.

[Duncan, Wand Bolivar, 1884-1970](#)

A soldier writes from Camp Greene in North Carolina, where he discusses the war with French officers, then from Camp Mills in New York en route to France. The collection also includes items relating to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and a service flag for home display.

[Edmunds, John Ray, 1896-1978](#)

A soldier writes to his mother in Kentucky as he recovers from influenza in camp at Great Lakes, Illinois.

[Fenwick, John, 1890-1937](#)

This Kentucky, soldier's 1918 letter from France describes preparations to move to the front and exposure to shell fire.

[Fleischman, Adolf John, 1889-1987](#)

A soldier writes in November 1918 from Corbin, Kentucky to his wife in Louisville of his plans to return home.

[Fox Family Papers](#)

From France, soldier William B. Kerr writes his sweetheart in Tompkinsville, Kentucky of his fears she will contract influenza—or marry someone else—and explains that only his letters to her are subject to military censorship.

[Gerwig, Frank Todd, 1897-1962](#)

Training at Fort Thomas, Kentucky, Gerwig writes home to Pennsylvania of a measles quarantine, the routines of military life, and of his readiness to serve overseas.

[Gordon, Maurice Kirby, 1878-1974](#)

The papers of this Hopkins County, Kentucky native contain materials relating to his service as an officer with the American Expeditionary Force and his involvement with the American Legion. Also included is a military cartoon book from the war.

[Gorham, Fred Jaynes, 1878-1918](#)

A Paris, Kentucky native and Spanish-American War veteran, Gorham re-enlisted to help train younger soldiers at Fort Thomas, Kentucky and in New Mexico. His letters to his wife and mother describe his work, which ended suddenly upon his death from complications of influenza.

[Read more](#)

[Graham, Vere, 1897-1971](#)

A certificate documents this Indiana native's service with the U.S. Marine Corps from 1918-1919.

[Grinstead, James David, 1894-1976](#)

This Barren County, Kentucky soldier describes military life at Camp Zachary Taylor and at camps in Mississippi and New Jersey.

[Hagerman, Bettie \(Robertson\), 1867-1926](#)

Organizational materials for a food sale by the Warren County, Kentucky chapter to raise funds for the Red Cross.

[Hanson, Albert C., 1895-1976](#)

While serving in France, Hanson writes to his future wife in Newport, Kentucky of his eagerness to return home.

[Hardcastle Family Papers](#)

Warren County, Kentucky native Robert F. Hardcastle's 1919 discharge certificate from the U.S. Army.

[Harris, Downey Lamar, 1875-1956](#)

The brother of Simpson County, Kentucky soldier George DeWitt Harris writes to console his family over the loss and to express renewed dedication to his work as a physician at Camp Lee, Virginia.

[Harris Family Papers](#)

Simpson County, Kentucky brothers George and Downey Harris served, respectively, as a second lieutenant in France and a camp physician in Virginia. Downey survived the war, while George died of battle wounds in October 1918. Their letters home describe their training and duties; included are family letters relating to the return of George's body from overseas in 1921.

[Harris, George DeWitt, 1876-1918](#)

Family letters to this soldier from Simpson County, Kentucky include an expression of concern for a wound that had caused his death by the time the letter was written.

[Haskins, Lee Owsley, 1890-1964](#)

Letters written to Captain Haskins by his family in Bowling Green, Kentucky describe life at home, including the ebbing of the influenza epidemic and the welcoming of a troop train to town.

[Helm, Margie May, 1894-1991](#)

Margie Helm's brothers write to family during their military service as officers in France; one describes life aboard the troop ship USS Powhatan. [Read more](#)

[Herdman, Guy Hess, 1875-1947](#)

Letters explain attorney Herdman's appointment to Warren County, Kentucky's Legal Advisory Board, created to assist young men in complying with selective service laws.

["Hicks in Washington"](#)

A lighthearted reminiscence of an unidentified woman's experiences working in wartime Washington and living at a boarding house with other "hicks."

[Holstein, Otto, 1883-1934](#)

A 1917 memorandum from the Provost Marshall in Lexington, Kentucky describes an altercation between military police and African Americans.

[Houchin, Roy Franklin II, b. 1954](#)

Houchin interviews Douglas Campbell regarding his World War I aerial combat experience, and discusses World War I military uniforms with Bob Ford.

[Howell, Ray, 1893-1977](#)

Postcards sent during Howell's service in France, his discharge certificate, and a letter of another "Ray Howell," serving in Germany, to whom a letter from Howell's sister was sent by mistake.

[Read more](#)

[Hudkins, Edgar Fernando, 1893-1977](#)

This soldier writes from France in February 1919 of the monotony of postwar military life and of his hopes to finally return home, albeit to an uncertain future.

[Hughes, Berta \(Brinton\), 1868-1947](#)

A soldier's letter from Camp Taylor expresses condolences to Mrs. Hughes on the death of her sons Tom and Lee.

[Johnson, John R., 1893-1974, and Andrew W. Johnson, b. 1896](#)

Brothers John and Andrew Johnson of Wooster, Ohio wrote home of life at camp in South Carolina and New York, as well as at Camp Zachary Taylor. They describe the ordeals of vaccination, quarantines for influenza and (in John's case) conditions in France at the close of the war.

[Read more](#)

[Jones, George](#)

Letters to Jones describe life at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, commenting on the camp's size, the YMCA, church services, food, training and "flying machines."

[Jones, Howard Malcolm and Frances \(Young\) Jones Collection](#)

Papers of the Jones family of Barren County, Kentucky include Howard B. Smith's notebook kept during officer's training and his letters, first from Camp Zachary Taylor and then from Camp Sherman, Ohio, where he details an influenza outbreak.

[Jones, Lane D., b. 1883?](#)

A 1918 solicitation from the National War Savings Committee chairman for Wayne County, Kentucky outlines the ways in which Americans can invest in the war effort.

[Kinney, Grover, 1885-1963](#)

This Lewis County, Kentucky farmer's papers include instructions outlining his duties with the county branch of the National Catholic War Council.

[Kirby, Carlisle Wilkins, 1890-1968](#)

Though incomplete, this collection includes data on World War I veterans in Warren County, Kentucky compiled by Kirby and others for the Works Progress Administration's Veterans' Graves Registration Project.

[Knisley, Clyde Vernon, Jr., 1918-1945](#)

From the trenches in Belgium and France, Clyde's father cheerfully writes home to Newport, Tennessee in summer 1918.

[Lambert, James Knox Polk, 1864-1960](#)

Simpson County, Kentucky native Lambert served in England and France with the YMCA. His journals chronicle his experiences at length, and include his thoughts on major battles, the war's destructiveness, the YMCA's role, and peace negotiations. Read [more](#), [more](#) and [more](#)

[Lissauer, Mildred Wallis \(Potter\), 1897-1998 - Collector](#)

A scrapbook kept by Martha Potter of Bowling Green, Kentucky, documents her son John's service in France. Includes John's letters, keepsakes and officer's handbook. [Read more](#)

[Martin, Charles Roy, 1892-1984](#)

Missouri native Martin writes from camps in Texas and New Jersey and from France of military life and his activities pending demobilization after the Armistice.

[Mason, Mildred A. \(Wild\), 1899-1997](#)

Certificates and pins belonging to this Latonia, Kentucky resident relating to war bonds and civilian service organizations.

[McCallum, Elizabeth Elliott \(Cherry\), 1890-1985](#)

Postcards from a Red Cross nurse visiting Paris, France in 1918 describe her sightseeing, note a recent air raid, and mourn the lack of sweets.

[McElroy, Clarence Underwood, 1849-1928](#)

The papers of this Bowling Green, Kentucky attorney include solicitations for war relief funds and letters from clients overseas reacting to the conflict. [Read more](#)

[McWherter, Henry Newton, 1858-1923](#)

His father's 1918 letter to McWherter, then serving overseas, refers to family, friends and the influenza outbreak.

[Melton Family Papers](#)

These family papers include Private Lee Strum's discharge certificate and a letter remarking on the prevalence of influenza in Webster and Graves counties in Kentucky.

[Milburn, Blanche](#)

A soldier at Camp Zachary Taylor writes Blanche confessing to an unauthorized absence in Indianapolis.

[Milem, Charles Arthur, 1893-1950](#)

Milem's 1919 letters from Verdun, France report on his uneventful military life after the Armistice and his longing for demobilization and return home.

[Miller, Arthur](#)

Miller's letter from Camp Zachary Taylor describes his officer's training and praises Louisville, Kentucky for its hospitality.

[Morton, David, 1886-1957](#)

Poems written and collected by this Elkton, Kentucky native include verse with World War I themes.

[Muncy, William McKinley, 1894-1963](#)

A soldier at Camp Zachary Taylor writes of training, vaccination, social activities, desertion and suicide among his comrades, and the treatment of conscientious objectors.

[Patterson, Frank, 1895-1969](#)

Honorable discharge certificate of this Warren County, Kentucky soldier, issued at Camp Zachary Taylor.

[Phillips, Clem Benjamin, 1894-1970](#)

This Missouri native writes of his training and camp life in Kansas and New Jersey and his service in France, where he is wounded. Family members write of their war work and the impact on St. Louis, Missouri of the influenza epidemic. [Read more](#)

[Price Family](#)

Warren County, Kentucky native Robert Yancy Price writes to his sweetheart from camp in North Carolina and France. Includes his discharge certificate and other military documents.

[Price, Joseph Llewellyn, 1877-1949](#)

Papers of this Marshall County, Kentucky attorney include handbooks and bulletins (*The Spy Glass*) of the American Protective League, lists of Kentuckians failing to report for military duty, patriotic poetry, and records relating to his service as Marshall County administrator for the U. S. Food Administration.

[Pusey, William Allen, 1865-1940](#)

A letter seeking the services of Dr. Pusey, of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, in the Medical Reserve Corps to advise on venereal diseases and their prevention.

[Rainey, Granville Pillowipskin, 1890?-1945](#)

While serving in France, a sergeant writes to his family in Indiana of German prisoners of war, atrocities, aerial combat, influenza, and Armistice celebrations.

[Rau, Ernest, 1874-1962](#)

Papers of Rau, a captain with the Army Medical Corps, include a list of personnel at the hospital at Camp Wheeler, Georgia.

[Rice Collection](#)

Letters from England to poet Cale Young Rice from classical scholar Gilbert Murray and others provide civilian views of the war, the wounded and atrocities.

[Richey, Nancy Carol, b. 1959 – Collector](#)

Notices to World War I veteran James D. Preston document his bonus payments.

[Settle, Margery Lucille, 1899-1980](#)

A soldier from McLean County, Kentucky writes in 1918 of his training and his attempts to communicate with French women and, in 1919, of his progress in returning home.

[Short, Drucilla Jane \(Harris\), 1878-1952](#)

Drucilla writes from Franklin, Kentucky to her brother George Harris about the closure of schools and theaters due to influenza, and the possible deployment overseas of their brother Downey. The letters were returned after George's death in France.

[Smith, Cooper Ray, 1887-1951](#)

A Warren County, Kentucky soldier who arrives in France as the war ends writes of his trip overseas, local sights, the Armistice celebrations, and his regrets over the news of influenza deaths at home.

[Smith, Rhonda](#)

"Death on the Rails," a WKU student's paper about a 1918 rail accident in France that killed members of the 113th Engineer Battalion and 138th Field Artillery.

[Sorgen, Vinton Grant, 1894-1968](#)

From Camp Zachary Taylor, Sorgen writes to his family in Ohio of entering camp, receiving vaccinations, and seeing the aviation field.

[Sprowl, Wilson](#)

Sprowl writes to his family in Monroe County, Kentucky of his arrival and vaccination at Camp Zachary Taylor, and of rifle training at Camp Custer in Michigan. Includes King George V's welcome to American soldiers and rules of conduct during the overseas crossing. [Read more](#)

[Strahm Family Collection](#)

A history of the 91st Aero Squadron, 1917-1919, the unit of Bowling Green, Kentucky "ace" Victor Strahm.

[Strahm, Victor Herbert, 1897-1957](#)

Letters of Strahm to his parents in Bowling Green, Kentucky detail his exploits in France, where his duties involved surveillance and spotting but where he also earned the designation “ace” for his downing of five German planes.

[Street, James William, 1858-1944](#)

Street’s 1917 journal includes the names of Lyon County, Kentucky men departing for military service.

[Temple Family Papers](#)

A soldier describes his training in Iowa and Oklahoma and praises the YMCA’s work on behalf of servicemen.

[Tichenor Collection](#)

This family collection includes letters of Elizabeth (Cherry) McCallum about her work overseas as a Red Cross nurse during the war.

[Topmiller Family Papers](#)

Soldiers send postcards from France to a young lady in Owensboro, Kentucky and write from Camp Zachary Taylor of YMCA amenities and a recent quarantine.

[Van Meter, William Swan, 1891-1958](#)

A Hardin County, Kentucky soldier stationed in Germany after the Armistice writes of his pastimes while awaiting demobilization.

[Venable Family Papers](#)

A soldier in pre-induction training from Christian County, Kentucky writes his mother with a description of his life in camp near Syracuse, New York.

[Wagoner, Lloyd, 1891-1967](#)

Ohio native Wagoner writes to his parents of seeing “flying machines” en route to Fort Thomas, Kentucky, where he is processed and inoculated for military service.

[Walter, Jacob “Jack” Bradford](#)

On his way to camp in South Carolina, Bradford embraces his patriotic duty but consoles his sweetheart on their separation.

[Watkins, James Fredrick, 1895-1982](#)

Watkins writes to his parents describing a military policeman’s duties and giving a brief picture of St. Sulpice, France and environs.

[West, James G.](#)

Letters of soldiers Arthur Jones and D. D. Dooley tell of the rigors of military training, duty overseas, their impressions of France, and their Armistice celebrations.

[Wilson, Gust Emanuel, 1898-1963](#)

Sent overseas just as the war ends, this soldier writes with a few observations about his French hosts.

[Wilson, Ivan, 1889-1981](#)

A diary of this Calloway County, Kentucky native records his duty as a clerk and orderly at Camp Zachary Taylor.

[Winfrey, Charlie Ray, 1896-1980](#)

Records relating to Winfrey's military service include postcards from France, a pass issued at Camp Zachary Taylor, his discharge, and materials on the 30th American Division and on Russell County, Kentucky veterans.

[World War I, 1914-1918](#)

A welcoming message, April 1918, from King George V to soldiers of the United States, bidding them "God speed on your mission."

[World War I, 1914-1918](#)

A speech by an unknown author explains "Why We Are at War with Germany."

[YMCA – Rennes, France](#)

The 1919 guest book of this YMCA post documents both the soldiers' gratitude for the work of the organization and their yearning to go home. [Read more](#)

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