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Stewart, James Minor, 1916-2017 (MSS 748)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
 Department of Library Special Collections
 Western Kentucky University
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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 748 STEWART, James Minor, 1916-2017

½ box. 5 folders. 23 items. 1941-1945. Originals.

SC2023.2.1

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

James Minor Stewart, the son of George W. Steward and Florence May (Coombs) Stewart, was born in Evansville, Indiana on 5 June 1916. The family moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky when Stewart was a child, and operated a butcher shop on College Street. Stewart attended school in Rockfield and, at 21, became the manager of the nightclub located at Lost River Cave.

Drafted into the Army at the onset of World War II, Stewart trained in Macon, Georgia and Belfast, Ireland. On 18 February 1943, Stewart was captured by the Germans in North Africa. He was held in a succession of POW camps in Germany (Stalag VII-A Munich, Stalag III-B Furstenberg, Arbeitskommando I Trattendorf, and Stalag XI-A Altengrabow), where his carpentry skills were put to use in the workshops. He worked as a volunteer for the Red Cross in April 1945, and was liberated by British forces on 2 May 1945.

After returning home, Stewart married Ruth Roach in June 1948 and they had three children. Stewart resumed managing the Lost River Cave Night club, and was also a farmer and home builder. He was one of the founders of Stewart-Richey Construction Company.

James Minor Stewart died on 26 April 2017 and is interred in Bowling Green's Fairview Cemetery.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists of James Minor Stewart's wartime log, published by the War Prisoners' Aid of the Y.M.C.A. and given to prisoners of war by the Red Cross. As Stewart indicated on the title page, the book is "a summarized collection of literary thoughts and souvineers [*sic*] of time spent in a prison camp . . . proof of effort made to keep my tract of thought from weaving itself among the barbed wires." Included are:

- drawings and artwork by Stewart and fellow prisoners depicting prison life and holiday observances;
- a timeline of Stewart's service in Europe (p. 5);
- names and addresses of fellow prisoners (pp. 7-23);
- war- and POW-themed poetry;

- photographs and drawings of girlfriends Winona Simpson and Rose Brown;
- envelopes from letters written to Stewart while a prisoner of war;
- photographs of the prison camp and fellow prisoners;
- photographs of the camp orchestra and theatricals;
- German banknotes and currency distributed to prisoners of war;
- an official military ballot from the County of Allegheny, Pennsylvania Board of Elections for the general election of 7 November 1944;
- an April 1945 flyer warning German soldiers against leaving their posts; and
- a cloth armband bearing a swastika (transferred to the Kentucky Museum).

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	James M. Stewart	1941-1945	23 items
Folder 1	Inventory and biographical data		5 items
Folder 2	Wartime log	1941-1945	1 item
Folder 3	Loose items removed from wartime log	1944-1945, n.d.	15 items
Folder 4	Official military ballot, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania and envelope	1944	1 item
Folder 5	Homemade cover for wartime log	n.d.	1 item

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS STEWART, James Minor, 1941-1945
748 1916-2017

Wartime log kept by James M. Stewart, Bowling Green, Kentucky, during his 2½ years as a prisoner of war in Germany during World War II. Includes artwork, poetry and photographs of the prison camp and fellow prisoners.

½ box. 5 folders. 23 items. Originals.
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SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Elections and election campaigns, 1944
Money – German, 1941-1944
Stewart, James Minor, 1916-2017 – Photograph

World War II, 1939-1945 – Campaigns, battles, military actions – Sidi Bou Zid, 1943
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Poetry
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Prisoners and prisons – Germany, 1943-1945
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Rationing, 1945
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Red Cross – Relating to
 World War II, 1939-1945 – Y.M.C.A. – Relating to

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