

MS-196, Clair Wilbur Welty Papers

Collection Number: MS-196

Title: Clair Wilbur Welty Papers

Dates: 1905-1922 (bulk 1917-1918)

Creator: Welty, Clair Wilbur, 1890-1918

Summary/Abstract:

Clair Wilbur Welty (1890-1918) enlisted in the United States Army Signal Corps during World War I and served as a pilot-trainer. He died November 10, 1918, as a result of a mid-air collision at Issoudun, France. The collection includes academic records, military records and orders concerning Welty's brief service as an Army officer, letters of condolence addressed to his mother Mary Welty following his death, and a few photographs.

Quantity/Physical Description: 0.25 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection.

Restrictions on Use:

Copyright restrictions may apply. Unpublished manuscripts are protected by copyright. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder.

Preferred Citation:

MS-196, the Clair Wilbur Welty Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

Related Material:

Additional manuscripts and artifacts pertaining to Clair W. Welty can be found at the Apple Creek Historical Society in Apple Creek, Ohio, Welty's hometown. The manuscripts include Welty's baptismal certificate, high school diploma, and original death certificate signed by General John J. Pershing. The artifacts include Welty's World War I uniform, footlocker, and bedroll. (These items were formerly at the American Legion Post 147, in Apple Creek, Ohio.)

Acquisition: Wright State University Special Collections and Archive accessioned the Clair Wilbur Welty Collection in 1989. It was donated by Dr. Gordon Welty, then a professor at Wright State University.

Processed by: The collection was originally processed by David Barno, June 1990. Revised by Lisa Rickey, March 2014.

Arrangement: The collection consists of 8 file folders arranged into a single series. Materials include academic records, military orders, correspondence, an obituary, and photographs.

Biographical/Historical Note

Clair Wilbur Welty was born October 15, 1890, to A. J. and Mary Welty. He lived in Apple Creek, Ohio, located near Wooster in the northeastern part of the state. Welty attended grade school and high school in his home community, graduating from Apple Creek High School in 1905. He left for a brief period to attend the College of Wooster, then returned to teach in his old school district. In October 1917, Welty enlisted in the United States Army Signal Corps. This was an unusual action for someone who was raised Mennonite, as Welty had been. He was trained as an airplane pilot at Ohio State University. Upon the completion of his training in November 1917, Welty was commissioned Second Lieutenant. After additional training in California, Welty was sent to France as part of a group of commissioned flying officers. After he recovered from a brief period of illness, Welty was ordered to Issoudun, France, where he served as a pilot-trainer. On November 10, 1918, the day before the war ended, another pilot's plane crashed into Welty's Nieuport 28 during a routine training flight. The details appear to have been glossed over in several of the letters which were later sent to Mary Welty, but it is obvious that Clair Welty survived the crash for only a short period of time and died the same day. He was buried November 11, Armistice Day, following day in AEF Cemetery 32, Issoudun, France. Welty was later re-interred in Apple Creek Cemetery, in his hometown.

Scope and Content

The collection is arranged into one chronological series. The series consists of a partial set of academic records and teaching certificates, military orders concerning Welty's brief service as an Army officer, and letters of condolence addressed to his mother Mary Welty after his death in November 1918. Writers include Lt. J. Russell Worthington, a pilot in Welty's unit, and U.S. Senator Benjamin F. Welty. The collection also includes a handwritten obituary, army identification card, and a few photographs.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Welty, Clair Wilbur, 1890-1918

Organizations/Corporate Names

United States. Army. American Expeditionary Forces -- History -- World War, 1914-1918

United States. Army. Signal Corps.

Subjects (General)

World War, 1914-1918 -- Aerial operations

World War, 1914-1918 -- France

Material Types
Correspondence
Photographs

Collection Inventory

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Academic Records	1905-1910
1	2	Military Orders	1917-1918
1	3	Correspondence	1918
1	4	Correspondence	1919
1	5	Correspondence	1920-1922
1	6	Correspondence	Undated
1	7	Handwritten Obituary	1918
1	8	Identification Papers and Photographs	Undated