

Baylor University . The Texas Collection

Wilhelm Esch Collection. Inclusive: 1870-1943, undated, Bulk: 1917-1919

[Full Finding Aid](#)

Summary Information

Creator	Dodson Jr., Mrs. Pit Esch, Wilhelm, d. 1946
Extent (quantity/size)	In the initial gift, the Wilhelm Esch Collection was housed in one large cardboard box. After processing, it consists of three document boxes and one oversized box (3.5 linear feet)
Language	English; French; German
Abstract	This collection contains certificates of appointment and of honorable discharge for German-American soldier Wilhelm Esch, photographs and books concerning military life in World War 1, items related to the Order of the Elks and miscellaneous WWI items including ration books.

Subjects

German Americans -- History. / Kentucky. National Guard -- History. / World War, 1914-1918 -- United States. / World War, 1914-1918.

Administrative Information

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Preferred Citation When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is:

Wilhelm Esch Collection, Accession #3792, Box#, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information Described by Thomas DeShong and released on 2012-10-19.

Scope and Content

The Wilhelm Esch Collection is an intentionally assembled collection donated by Mrs. Clarabele "Pit" Dodson, Jr. in 2010 December. The materials, dealing primarily with the World War I period, range from 1870 to 1943.

Series I. Correspondence contains a few letters and postcards. Series II. Financial Documents consists of ration books and stamp albums from both the World War I and World War II periods. Series III. Literary Productions includes World War I booklets and pamphlets as well as Esch's military records (discharges, commissions, etc.) Series IV. Photographic Materials contains dozens of pictures of men in training, tanks, planes, cavalry, and blimps from the World War I period. Series V. Artifacts consists of Esch's uniform buttons, military whistles, and a pair of pilot goggles.

Administrative/Biographical History

Little biographical information is known about Wilhelm Esch, a German-American who served in the United States military during World War I. The bulk of the materials within this collection highlight Esch's military career. The collection also features photographs and secondary literature concerning military life during the First World War.

Wilhelm Esch served multiple enlistments in the Kentucky National Guard and United States Army. He enlisted in the Kentucky National Guard in 1911 June, serving a little less than seven months before his discharge. When the United States joined the Allies in 1917, Esch was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. On 1917 August 5, the Kentucky National Guard unit that Esch belonged to was drafted into federal service as the 138th Field Artillery. In just four months, Esch was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant. In addition to service along the Mexican border, particularly in El Paso, Esch and the 138th joined up with the American Expeditionary Force from 1918 October to December. With the war officially ending on Armistice Day (November 11), Esch and his unit were honorably discharged in 1919 January at Camp Zachary Taylor in Kentucky.

Materials within the collection reveal that Esch later joined the United States Army as a First Lieutenant of Field Artillery in 1925 January. He enlisted for a five year term. Esch passed away in 1946. His wife Bessie survived him.

Mrs. Clarabele "Pit" Dodson was the donor of this collection. Clarabele and her late husband, Thomas Dodson, Jr., were wealthy ranchers in Wise County, Texas. Mrs. Dodson is a significant donor for the Cook's Children Medical Center in Fort Worth where a building was named in her honor in 2012 March. A collection of her personal materials can also be found here at The Texas Collection.

Related Resources

Related records in other Archive collections

Collection Greaver Lewis Miller Collection, Inclusive 1918-1959, undated , Bulk 1917-1920, 1955-1959

Related citations

"138th Field Artillery." Accessed October 3, 2012. Available at

<http://kynghistory.ky.gov/major+commands/138th+fa+and+h.htm>.

"Cook Children's Dedicates Nearly Completed Expansion." Published March 1, 2012. Accessed October 3, 2012.

Available at <http://www.star-telegram.com/2012/03/01/3777234/cook-childrens-dedicates-nearly.html>.

"Thomas L. Dodson." Accessed October 3, 2012. Available at [http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?](http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=84871625)

[page=gr&GRid=84871625](http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=84871625).

Archival Arrangement

The initial gift came to The Texas Collection without previous organization or arrangement in 2010 December. The

materials, while in relatively good condition, were loosely scattered in one large cardboard box. A preliminary inventory was completed in 2011 March.

After processing, the Wilhelm Esch Collection is now organized in five series according to material type: I. Correspondence, II. Financial Documents, III. Literary Productions, IV. Photographic Materials, and V. Artifacts.

Series 1: Correspondence. 1870-1917, undated

Administrative/Biographical History

This series contains general correspondence collected by the donor including a letter from E. Welch to her husband, a few Christmas cards, and postcards. The materials are in good condition.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence: General, 1870-1917, undated

Series 2: Financial Documents. 1919-1943

Administrative/Biographical History

This series contains financial records including the pay record book of Joe Stubblefield, a stamp album, and two ration books from the World War II period. The materials are in average to good condition and are organized chronologically.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 2. Financial Documents: Pay Record Book: Joe Stubblefield, 1919

Box 1. Folder 3. Financial Documents: Stamp Album, 1942

Box 1. Folder 4. Financial Documents: War Ration Book: Frank Begin, 1943

Box 1. Folder 5. Financial Documents: War Ration Book: Tullie Thornton, 1943

Series 3: Literary Productions. 1912-1941, undated

Administrative/Biographical History

This series contain the military records of Wilhelm Esch as well as books collected during his travels in Europe. The latter focus on topics such as tourism, venereal diseases, field surgery, and public policy. The materials are in good condition and are organized by type.

Item List

Box 1. Folder 6. Literary Productions: Booklet: *Our Boys in Khaki*, undated

Box 1. Folder 7. Literary Productions: Booklet: Sloppy Joe's Bar: Havana, Cuba, 1935

Box 1. Folder 8. Literary Productions: Calendar: German, 1918

Box 1. Folder 9. Literary Productions: Manual: Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, 1915 August

Box 1. Folder 10. Literary Productions: Military Field Notebook: Wilhelm Esch, 1917

Box 1. Folder 11. Literary Productions: Pamphlet: Patricia Dubber: "Armed Forces of the U.S.A.", 1941

Box 1. Folder 12. Literary Productions: Pamphlet: "When You Go Home": Venereal Diseases, undated

Box 1. Folder 13. Literary Productions: Printed Materials, 1918-1919

Box 1. Folder 14. Literary Productions: Program: Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks: Fort Worth Lodge, 1928 May 7-9

Box 1. Folder 15. Literary Productions: Tourist Guide: Paris, France, undated

Box 1. Folder 16. Literary Productions: Book: "Buck Private" McCollum: *History and Rhymes of the Lost Battalion*, 1919

Box 1. Folder 17. Literary Productions: Book: R.C. Wood: *The Soldier's First Aid*, 1917

Box 2. Folder 1. Literary Productions: Book: *Soldier's - Sailor's Diary and English-French Dictionary Self-Pronouncing*, undated

Box 2. Folder 2. Literary Productions: Book: *Songs of the Soldiers and Sailors, U.S.*, 1917

Box 2. Folder 3. Literary Productions: Book: The Berner-Mayer Company: Bartender's Guide, undated

Box 2. Folder 4. Literary Productions: Book: *The War of Italy*, 1918

Box 2. Folder 5. Literary Productions: Book: *U.S. Army Songbook*, 1918

Box 2. Folder 6. Literary Productions: Book: William Stevenson: *At the Front in a Flivver*, 1917

Box 4 OVZ. Folder 9. Literary Productions: Order: Army: Wilhelm Esch, 1912-1930

Series 4: Photographic Materials. 1917-1918, undated

Administrative/Biographical History

This series contains two types of materials: books of panoramic views (Germany, France) and dozens of photographs concerning World War I subjects (soldiers, tanks, planes, cavalry, blimps, camps, etc.). These materials are in good condition.

Item List

Box 2. Folder 7. Photographic Materials: Book: Panoramic Views: France, undated

Box 3. Folder 1. Photographic Materials: Book: Panoramic Views: Germany, undated

Box 3. Folder 2. Photographic Materials: Photos: General, undated

Box 3. Folder 3. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (1 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 4. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (2 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 5. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (3 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 6. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (4 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 7. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (5 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 8. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (6 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 9. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (7 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 10. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (8 of 10), circa 1917-1918

Box 3. Folder 11. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (9 of 10), circa 1917-1918
Box 3. Folder 12. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Army (10 of 10), circa 1917-1918
Box 3. Folder 13. Photographic Materials: Photos: United States Navy Blimp, undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 10. Photographic Materials: Photos: Oversized: El Paso, Texas, 1917

Series 5: Artifacts. undated

Administrative/Biographical History

This series contains mementos from Esch's service in the United States military. These three-dimensional objects include lanyards, uniform buttons, whistles, pins, and pilot glasses. The materials are in excellent condition.

Item List

Box 4 OVZ. Folder 1. Artifacts: Lanyard, undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 2. Artifacts: Small Officer's Buttons (8), undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 3. Artifacts: Anti-Dimming Stick for Gas Mask, undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 4. Artifacts: Large Officer's Buttons (5), undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 5. Artifacts: Military Whistles (3), undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 6. Artifacts: Red Cross Pin, Badge, U.S. Lapel Pin, undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 7. Artifacts: Pilot Goggles, undated
Box 4 OVZ. Folder 8. Artifacts: Protective Lenses and Carrying Case, undated