

Guide to the Gustav Klemp German World War I collection

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1901-1922

Title Statement

Guide to the Gustav Klemp German World War I collection

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

C0250

Date

1901-1922

Graphic materials

1 (Box)

Language

German

Abstract

Contains certificates, postcards, artwork, and a notebook by Gustav Klemp (1882-1941), an artist and German army medic during the First World War, as well as First World War-era medallions.

Creator

Klemp, Gustav

Physical Characteristics

0.25 linear feet (1 box)

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions on personal use. Permission to publish material from the Gustav Klemp German World War I collection must be obtained from Special Collections and Archives, George Mason University Libraries.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Richard Passig in September 2014.

Processing Information

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Preferred Citation

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Biographical note

Gustav Klemp (1882-1941) was an artist from West Prussia in what was Germany until 1919 and is now western Poland. He was a member of the Deutschen Maler-Bundes (German Painters' Association). Klemp was in his mid-thirties at the outbreak of World War I in 1914, and he served as a medic with the German Army. He sent a number of postcards from the Eastern front to his wife, Martha Klemp, and he also painted watercolors that portrayed camp life, landscapes of the war and troops. After the war and the creation of an independent Poland, he and his family were given the decision to become Polish citizens or emigrate. They emigrated to the United States and settled in the upper midwest, first in Iowa and then in Wisconsin. Klemp made his living in the United States primarily by painting murals for churches. He died in May, 1941, six months before the United States entered World War II.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of 2 certificates, several postcards and artworks, 4 medallions, and a notebook that primarily document people and places during World War I, particularly German soldiers on the Eastern Front. Many of the postcards are group portraits of soldiers in military uniforms. Several have messages from Gustav Klemp (the primary recipient appears to have been Frau Martha Klemp) and postmarks from areas along the Eastern Front, such as Russia, Poland, and Romania. One postcard from page 15 is postmarked Lautenburg on August 15, 1914, suggesting that Klemp may have been present at the nearby Battle of Tannenberg later that month. The artworks consist of both drawings and watercolors that document similar subject matter found in the postcards. The drawings and watercolors were created by the donor's grandfather, Gustav Klemp.

Series one contains two certificates, one from the Deutschen Maler-Bundes (German Painters' Association) in 1901 and one from the Handwerkskammer für Westpreußen zu Danzig in 1910. Series two contains postcards that feature soldiers and landscapes of the Eastern Front during World War I (1914-1918), as well as an artists' group from before the war (1906) and a group of soldiers after the war (1922). Series 3 contains sketches and watercolors illustrating camp life, soldiers, and landscapes on the Eastern Front from 1915-1918. Series four contains four medallions circa 1914, one of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, one of Kaiser Wilhelm with Emperor Franz-Josef of Austria, one of Vice Admiral Von Spee, and one of General von Mackensen. Series five consists of a journal circa post-1918 in which Gustav Klemp seems to have written a narrative of the World War I years. The majority of the collection is in German, with some postcards containing text in Hungarian and Polish.

Index Terms

Subjects:

World War, 1914-1918

Document Types:

Postcards

Alternative Form Available

Digitized versions of items in Series 1-3 can be found here: [Gustav Klemp German World War I collection](#).

Arrangement

Materials are arranged into three series by format.

- Series 1: Certificates, 1901, 1910 (pages 1-2)
- Series 2: Postcards, 1906-1922 (pages 3-17, 21, 23-28, 32, 35)
- Series 3: Artwork, 1915-1918 (pages 18-22, 28-34, 36)
- Series 4: Medallions, circa 1914
- Series 5: Notebook, circa post-1918

Contents List

Series 1: Certificates,

Unit Date 1901, 1910

Deutschen Maler-Bundes certificate and Meister-Brief, Handwerkskammer für Westpreussen zu Danzig,

Unit Date 1901, 1910

Text 1 (Box)

Container 1-2 (Page)

Series 2: Postcards,

Unit Date 1906-1922

Postcards of soldiers (in camp, at the front, in groups), painters' group (maler),

Unit Date 1906-1922

Text 1 (Box)

Container 3-6 (Page)

Postcards of places in Eastern Europe (Romania, Russia), soldiers at the front,

Unit Date 1912-18

Graphic materials 1 (Box)

Container 7-17, 22-28, 32 (Page)

Series 3: Artwork,

Unit Date 1915-1918

Watercolors and drawings of camps, army life, scenery, Jewish woman,

Unit Date 1915-1918

Graphic materials 1 (Box)

Container 18-22, 26, 28-34 (Page)

Series 4: Medallions,

Unit Date 1914

Medallions of Kaiser Wilhelm, Emperor Franz-Jozef, General von Mackensen, and Vice Admiral von Spee

Unit Date circa 1914

Realia 1 (Box)

Container 2 (Sleeve)

Series 5: Notebook,

Unit Date circa post-1918

Notebook

Unit Date circa post-1918

Container 1 (Box)

Scope and Content

This notebook appears to be a narrative of the World War I years by Gustav Klemp. It is entirely in German and is untranslated. Notebook cover is in poor condition and is becoming unbound from pages. Significant mold damage to several pages.