

Collection #
M0897

KENTON CRAIG EMERSON WORLD WAR I MATERIALS, 1914–31 (BULK 1917–19)

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Series Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Kathryn M. Wilmot
June 2007

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| VOLUME OF COLLECTION: | 2 manuscript boxes, 1 photograph box, 9 artifacts |
| COLLECTION DATES: | 1914–31 (bulk 1917–19) |
| PROVENANCE: | Andrew C. Emerson, Indianapolis, IN, June 2000 |

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.0887

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kenton Craig Emerson, also known as “Mike,” was born 4 December 1895 in Angola, Steuben County, Indiana to Fred A. Emerson and Ina [unknown] Emerson. Fred and Ina Emerson also had two other sons, Lawrence Douglas Emerson (“Bill”), born ca. 1898, and J. Thomas Emerson (“Tom”), born ca. 1906.

Prior to serving in the United States Army, Emerson was employed by the Paige Motor Company in Detroit, Michigan. The date Sgt. Emerson enlisted is not known, but the correspondence in the collection indicates he was in England and France in January and February of 1917 with the American Expeditionary Force, Motor Truck Company 315, Supply Train 404. He then writes from Fort Crook, Nebraska, in September 1917, and Fort Harrison, Indiana, in October 1917. In January 1918 Emerson went to Camp Merritt, New Jersey. During the month of January he was sent to France and was later stationed in Is-sur-Tille, Cote d’Or. In addition to Motor Truck Company 315, Emerson was assigned to the Wood Supply Office, Advance Quarter Master Depot #1. His duties during World War I included clearing land, chauffeuring officers, moving hospitals to the front lines, and driving and hauling ammunition for the Marines at Chateau Thierry.

Emerson returned home from the war in September 1919. The 1930 census indicates he married a woman named Lucille K. and they had two sons, David F. and Andrew C. His World War II registration card indicates he was working in Wabash for the Superior [sic] Insulation Company. Further information is not known.

Sources:

Information in the collection.

Ancestry Library Edition database. Available at: <http://www.ancestrylibrary.proquest.com>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is divided into four series: Correspondence; World War I Documents, Speeches, Artifacts; Photographs; Souvenir Postcards.

Series 1: Correspondence consists primarily of letters written by Kenton C. Emerson to his parents, with a few letters addressed to his brothers. There are a handful of letters written by people other than family in the collection, including one from Emerson's superior officer Col. Roy L. Marston.

Emerson describes the camps at which he is stationed, the scenery in France and his impressions of the country, and various towns he has seen including Alsace, Lorraine, Bordeaux, Dijon, Cannes, and Paris. His letters contain information on his three-week hospitalization and other illnesses, air raids near the front lines, the vehicles to which he is assigned and their performance, the shortage of funds, his affection for the Y.M.C.A., the Red Cross, food and rationing, and the importance of receiving mail. Emerson also expresses his difficulties in adjusting to army life and his discontent with the war and the lack of action he has seen. His letters include accounts of the front lines provided by other soldiers, and Emerson's patriotism surfaces often via claims that American soldiers are the world's best. He expresses much admiration for his superior officer Col. Marston.

Noteworthy letters include one dated December 1917 describing the hazing of a soldier with German sympathies, October and November 1918 letters mentioning people sick with influenza (the "Spanish Flu"), and one written in May 1919 describing the hanging of a soldier and the shooting of an officer accused of raping a young French girl (a picture postcard of the hanging is the folder labeled "Postcard Correspondence, 20 July 1914–24 June 1919"). Letters written during November 1918 provide reactions to the end of the war and victory celebrations, including the Victory Parade in Paris.

Series 2: World War I Documents, Speeches, Artifacts contains Emerson's special orders, permits, invitations, ration tickets, motor vehicle license, a booklet of President Woodrow Wilson's war speeches, and French and German currency.

Series 3: Photographs contains many images of Emerson, his fellow soldiers, Red Cross workers at the canteen, scenery in France, street scenes, buildings and churches intact and in ruins, and train yards and military camps. Some of the places shown include Belleau Wood Cemetery, Camp Doughboy, Dijon, Is-sur-Tille, Reims Cathedral, Til-Châtel, Verdun, Saint-Mihiel, and Versailles.

Series 4: Souvenir Postcards consists of blank postcards Emerson collected while visiting various cities in France, Monaco, and Switzerland.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Correspondence

| CONTENTS | CONTAINER |
|--|-----------------|
| Correspondence, 26 Jan 1917–31 Dec 1917 | Box 1, Folder 1 |
| Correspondence, 1 Jan 1918–27 April 1918 | Box 1, Folder 2 |
| Correspondence, 11 May 1918–28 July 1918 | Box 1, Folder 3 |
| Correspondence, 2 Aug 1918–28 Oct 1918 | Box 1, Folder 4 |
| Correspondence, 3 Nov 1918–7 Aug 1931 | Box 1, Folder 5 |
| Postcard correspondence, 20 July 1914–24 June 1919 | Box 1, Folder 6 |
| Postcard correspondence, 10 July 1919–13 Dec 1921; | Box 1, Folder 7 |

n.d.

Series 2: World War I Documents, Speeches, Artifacts

CONTENTS

Special orders and permits, 4 Dec 1918–11 June 1919

Invitations, cards, receipts, ca. 1917–19

Ration tickets, 1919

“War Speeches of Woodrow Wilson” booklet, 1924

French currency, 50 centimes note no. 761,694

French currency, 50 centimes note no. 264,371

French currency, 50 centimes note no. 360,205

French currency, half of a 5 franc note, no. M7588

French currency, fragment of a 5 franc note, no. G9916

Luxembourg currency, 2 franc note, no. 194849

German coin, 1874 Deutsches Reich 2 pfenning

German coin, 1912 Deutsches Reich 10 pfenning

German coin, 1875 Deutsches Reich 5 pfenning

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Artifacts: 2000.0887

Series 3: Photographs

CONTENTS

Belleau Wood Cemetery, France, ca. 1917–19

Boats and ships, ca. 1917–19

Camp Doughboy, ca. 1917–19

Camp, train yards, warehouses, ca. 1917–19

Church of Saint-Hilaire, Champagne, France, ca. 1917–19

Dijon, France, ca. 1917–19

CONTAINER

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 2

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 3

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 4

Photographs,
Box 1, Folder 5

Photographs,

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| | Box 1, Folder 6 |
| Emerson, Kenton Craig, ca. 1915–16 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 7 |
| Emerson, Red Cross workers, fellow soldiers, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 8 |
| Is-sur-Tille, France, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 9 |
| Jura Mountains tunnel, France/Switzerland, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 10 |
| Loue River Valley, France, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 11 |
| Mill House, France, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 12 |
| Reims Cathedral, France, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 13 |
| Til-Châtel, France, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 14 |
| Trenches, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 15 |
| Unidentified individuals, n.d. | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 16 |
| Unidentified soldiers, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 17 |
| Unidentified villages, buildings, streets, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 18 |
| Versailles, France, ca. 1917–19 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 19 |
| Victory parade, ca. 1918 | Photographs, Box 1, Folder 20 |

Series 4: Souvenir Postcards

CONTENTS

| |
|--|
| Souvenir postcards of Cannes, France, ca. 1917–19 |
| Souvenir postcards of Châlons-sur-Marne [Châlons-en-Champagne], France, ca. 1917–19 |
| Souvenir postcards of Château-Thierry, France, ca. 1917–19 |

CONTAINER

| |
|------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 12 |
| Box 1, Folder 13 |
| Box 1, Folder 14 |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Souvenir postcards of Fontainebleau, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 15 |
| Souvenir postcards of Franche-Comté, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 16 |
| Souvenir postcards of Grasse, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 17 |
| Souvenir postcards of Langres, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 18 |
| Souvenir postcards of Nancy, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 19 |
| Souvenir postcards of Nice, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 20 |
| Souvenir postcards of Paris, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 21 |
| Souvenir postcards of Plombières-les-Bains, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 22 |
| Souvenir postcards of Pont-du-Loup, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 23 |
| Souvenir postcards of Reims, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 24 |
| Souvenir postcards of Saint-Mihiel, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 25 |
| Souvenir postcards of Til-Châtel, France, ca. 1917– 19 | Box 1, Folder 26 |
| Souvenir postcards of Troyes, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 27 |
| Souvenir postcards of Verdun, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 1, Folder 28 |
| Souvenir postcards of Versailles, France, ca. 1917– 19 | Box 2, Folder 1 |
| Souvenir postcards of Monte Carlo, Monaco, ca. 1917–19 | Box 2, Folder 2 |
| Souvenir postcards of Switzerland, ca. 1917–19 | Box 2, Folder 3 |
| Souvenir postcard booklet of Paris, France, ca. 1917–19 (1 of 2) | Box 2, Folder 4 |
| Souvenir postcard booklet of Paris, France, ca. 1917–19 (2 of 2) | Box 2, Folder 5 |
| Souvenir postcard booklet of Saint-Mihiel, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 2, Folder 6 |
| Souvenir postcard booklet of Vercors, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 2, Folder 7 |
| Souvenir postcard booklet of Versailles, France, ca. 1917–19 | Box 2, Folder 8 |

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M0897).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.