

Finding aid for the Halden Adrion collection of World War II letters and photographs Collection 205

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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February 1997
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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator	Adrion, Halden, d. 1945
Title	Halden Adrion collection of World War II letters and photographs
Date [inclusive]	1940-1987
Extent	1.3 Linear feet Three boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Halden Adrion, a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, served as a bomber pilot during World War II. This collection consists primarily of letters written by Halden Adrion before and during his service as a bomber pilot in World War II (1940-1945) to his girlfriend and eventual fiancée, Elsie Evans. Also included are some letters from Evans to Adrion, along with a few other miscellaneous items of correspondence. The letters describe army life for Adrion, particularly the life of an Army Air Corps cadet and also his hopes and plans for the future. Adrion was presumed shot down over Japanese air space on May 26, 1945 and officially classified as killed in action on June 1, 1946 by the War Department. He received the Air Medal and one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster. The correspondence between Mrs. Mildred Adrion to Elsie Evans, 1942-1987, extend the collection well beyond the war years which form the bulk.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Halden Adrion, a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, served as a bomber pilot during World War II, from April of 1943 till his death over Japan on May 26, 1945. After graduating from high school, Adrion attended the University of Michigan from the fall of 1942 till March of 1943 when he was called up for duty. He had enlisted in the Army Reserve on December 14, 1942.

Adrion was stationed first in Scottfield, Illinois and then was transferred to Ft. McClellan, Alabama where he stayed till September of 1943. Next he attended Army Air Corps training sessions at Kent State University in Ohio until January of 1944. He was then stationed at Lowry Field in Colorado where he underwent more flight training. A succession of transfers eventually led to San Francisco in December of 1944. At this point he was put on active combat duty, flying bombing missions against Japanese targets. Adrion was presumed shot down over Japanese air space on May 26, 1945 and officially classified as killed in action on June 1, 1946 by the War Department. He received the Air Medal and one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster.

Scope and Contents note

Letters are from Adrion written to Elsie Evans, a one time resident of Grand Rapids, Michigan, while she attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri and stayed at Cheley Camps in Colorado where she worked during the summers. Also included are letters written by Evans to Adrion during the summer of 1943, and letters from Mrs. Adrion to Evans. There are also photographs from 1944 which show Adrion and Evans.

The letters portray army life at camps in the United States during World War II. The letters center mainly on Adrion's daily experiences and contain his viewpoint on many topics such as duty and education to name a few. Letters while on active service provide a glimpse at combat life but mainly focus on Adrion's daily experiences and thoughts. Another important component to the letters is Halden's relationship with Elsie, which portrays the rigors of an extended courtship during the war.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department February 1997

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Elsie Evans Pierce, accession number 1996.011

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Collection 125, Robinson Studio Collection contains numerous images from the time period of WWII. See some of these published in the book "Grand Rapids Goes to War" by Richard Harms and Robert W. Viol, 1993.

Collection 310, Grand Rapids in World War II, 1941-1946, Collection, is one of several archival collections which contain information about Grand Rapids soldiers during WWII.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- letters (correspondence)

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Adrion, Halden, d. 1945
- Pierce, Elsie Evans

Subject(s)

- World War, 1939-1945 -- Personal narratives, American

Correspondence

Collection Inventory

Series I Correspondence		
Letters, Halden to Elsie 1940-1945		
	Box	Folder
Letters, Halden to Elsie 1940-June 1943	1	1-14
Letters, Halden to Elsie July 1943-Nov. 1944	2	1-17
Letters, Halden to Elsie Dec. 1944	3	1
Letters, Halden to Elsie Jan. 1945	3	2
Letters, Halden to Elsie Feb. 1945	3	3
Letters, Halden to Elsie March 1945	3	4
Letters, Halden to Elsie April 1945	3	5
Letters, Halden to Elsie May 1945	3	6
Letters, Halden to Elsie April 1943-1944	3	7-12

Letters, Miscellaneous**Letters, Miscellaneous 1942-1987, n.d.**

	Box	Folder
Mrs. Adrion to Elsie Evans 1942-1987	3	13-14
Halden Adrion to Mr. and Mrs. Evans 1943	3	15
Adrion's Valentine's Day card to Elsie, n.d.	3	16

Series II Photographs

	Box	Folder
Adrion, Halden 1944	3	17
Adrion, Halden; Evans, Elsie 1944	3	18
Adrion, Herbert and Myldred; Evans, Elsie 1944	3	19
Adrion, Halden, Herbert, Myldred 1944	3	20
Adrion, Herbert and Myldred; Halden's Grandmother; Evans, Elsie 1944	3	21
Adrion, Halden and Herbert; Halden's Grandfather.	3	22