

Finding aid for the James Christensen collection

Collection 420

Finding aid prepared by Julie Tabberer

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

February 17, 2015

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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

November 2014

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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator - Donor	Christensen, James
Title	James Christensen collection
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1898-1936
Date [inclusive]	1898-1995
Extent	1.0 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>James Joseph Christensen (1912-2003) was the son of John M. Christensen and Eileen C. Worfel. The collection includes images and documents relating to or collected by James Christensen and his family. Included are programs, booklets and fliers from various organizations. A photograph album, soldier's handbook, portrait and military record relate to John M. Christensen's time serving in the United States Army during the Phillipine-American War. Also included are images from Eileen Worfel Christensen's family. The images include Central Avenue School and South Congregational Church (now St. Luke A.M.E. Zion Church).</p>

James J Christensen

James Joseph Christensen (21 October 1912 - 3 July 2003) was the son of John M. Christensen and Eileen C. Worfel. James graduated from Ottawa Hills High School and the University of Michigan (1935). He served in the United States Army during World War II (1942-1946). According to city directories, after the war he worked as a sales manager and vice-president for Carlton-Surrey (a furniture manufacturer), an office manager for Grand Rapids Upholstering and held various positions with the Michigan Employment Security Commission (now the Unemployment Insurance Agency). James married M. Virginia Friar on November 21, 1942. They had four children: M. Pamela, Cathleen, Michael and Eileen.

Scope and Contents note

The collection includes images and documents relating to or collected by James Christensen and his family. Material that appears to have been collected by James includes programs, booklets and fliers from various organizations, including high school commencements and plays, theatre programs and a church history.

A photograph album, soldier's handbook, portrait and military record relate to John M. Christensen's time serving in the United States Army during the Phillipine-American War. The photograph album shows candid images of life in the Phillipines during the war and includes American soldiers, Filipinos, scenery, buildings and a cock fight.

Also included are images from Eileen Worfel Christensen's family. These include family portraits and a series of glass negatives showing scenes around Grand Rapids circa 1900. The images include a photograph of Susan Howell Worfel standing on Center/Central Avenue (now Sheldon Avenue), with Central Avenue School and South Congregational Church (now St. Luke A.M.E. Zion Church) behind her. Central Avenue School was built in 1875, renamed Sheldon School circa 1912 and demolished and replaced with the current structure circa 1915/1916. This photograph may be one of only a few images of the original school building.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department November 2014

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

James Christensen, accessions 1992.025 and 1994.010.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Collection 54-38-10 - photographs of Frank Wenzel Worfel and Susan Howell Worfel

Collection 54-10-25 - photograph of Frank W Worfel, City Marshall, in City Hall

Controlled Access Headings

Family Name(s)

- Christensen
- Worfel

Genre(s)

- family papers

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Philippines -- History -- Philippine American War, 1899-1902

John Christensen military records

Collection Inventory

John Christensen military records 1898-1901

Scope and Contents note

John M. Christensen served in the 4th Infantry Regiment of the United States Army during the Philippine-American War. He served a three-year term, enlisting on December 12, 1898 and discharged December 11, 1901. He was appointed corporal on May 30, 1899 and promoted to sergeant on March 23, 1900.

The photograph album consists of candid photographs of life during the Philippine-American War. It includes photographs of Filipinos, American soldiers, buildings, a cock fight and scenery. The Soldier's Handbook includes handwritten notations on the clothing John received while in the Army.

Box

Photograph album, Philippine-American War circa 1899-1901

1

Box

Folder

The Soldier's Handbook for use in the Army of the United States 1898

1

11

Portrait, John M. Christensen in US Army uniform, taken in Manila 1900

1

10

Military record, John M. Christensen 1901

2

5

Programs, booklets and fliers 1900-1995

Scope and Contents note

Programs, booklets and fliers

	Box	Folder
The 1911 Lincoln Day Banquet includes images of guests and speakers, which include Theodore Roosevelt, Governor Chase S. Osborn and Senator William Alden Smith.		
Invitation/flier for the Grand Rapids Tennis Club (including pictures) [Grand Rapids Boat and Canoe Club]	2	6
Souvenir program, Klaw & Erlanger's Production of Gen. Lew Wallace's Ben-Hur [missing cover, poor condition] circa 1900	2	10
Program, Lincoln Day Banquet (Nineteenth Annual, Lincoln Club and Young Men's Republican Club) February 11, 1911	2	7
Program, Banishment of Care, Grand Rapids Public Schools June 1-2, 1923	2	6
Programs, Peg O' My Heart at the Regent Theatre June 29, 1925	2	6
Commencement program, Catholic Central High School June 13, 1928	2	6
Programs, Philharmonic Concerts - Yuudi Menuhin; Detroit Symphony Orchestra 1931	2	6
Program, Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra at Powers Theatre January 15-16, 1932	2	6
Program, Gilbert Miller presents Helen Hayes in Victoria Regina [poor condition] circa 1936	2	9

Ottawa Hills High School

Banquet-Programme, Du Club Francais (The French Club) 1959	2	6
Program, A Midsummer Night's Dream, the Grand Rapids Civic Ballet May 7-9, 1982	2	6
Booklet, St. Francis Xavier Diamond Jubilee 1989	2	6
St. Pius X Parish (Grandville, Mich.) - invitation and program, Praelatus Honorarius of Reverend Monsignor John A. Najdowski September 16, 1995	2	6
Ottawa Hills High School 1928-1934, n.d.		
Scope and Contents note		
The Indian Guide includes exterior and interior photographs, a teacher's directory and descriptions of departments and activities.		
	Box	Folder
The Indian Guide, volumes I and III 1928-1929, 1930-1931	2	8
Ottawa Hills Songs	2	8
Commencement Exercise programs 1932, 1934	2	8
Programs for productions of Pinafore and The Swan 1930, 1932	2	8
Worfel family images circa 1900, n.d.		

Portraits

Portraits		
	Box	Folder
Great-grandfather Anton Worfel	1	10
Great-Grandmother Babetta Herkner Worfel	1	10
Susan Lorraine Howell Worfel	1	10
Frank W. Worfel (City Marshall in the 1890s)	1	10
Glass negatives circa 1900		
Conditions Governing Use note		
A print of each glass negative is available in Box 2, Folder 1. Please use these prints before accessing the glass negatives.		
	Box	Folder
Prints of glass negatives	2	1
Susan Howell Worfel standing on Center or Central Avenue [Sheldon Avenue]. She is standing in front of Central Avenue School, with South Congregational Church in the background.	1	1
Susan Howell Worfel and two other women standing in the snow with winter coats and hats.	1	2

Miscellaneous

"Motorcade to Sparta." Three automobiles on a dirt road, filled with well-dressed passengers.	1	3
"Motorcade at Sparta, Camp Lake." Group photo in the woods, with men, women, children and a dog.	1	4
Portrait, unidentified woman	1	5
Group of children sitting on the steps of a house, boy holding birthday cake. [1017 Sheldon]	1	6
Birthday party at [1019 Sheldon]. Children and adults on the lawn with a birthday cake.	1	7
Car with five passengers and a dog. Man identified as Mr. Burch.	1	8
Mary Howell Howell, sitting on a porch with a book in her lap	1	9
Miscellaneous 1919-1935		
		Box
Doings of Battery B humorous happenings & striking situations in the experiences of its members. 328th field artillery, American expeditionary forces. Edward W. Barry, editor. 1919		2
	Box	Folder
Boy Scouts of America, Troop 8 - programme and group photograph circa 1924-1925	2	2

Miscellaneous

Genealogy photocopies, Worfel family (from Descendents of Wenzel Blumrich, 1969)	2	4
Group photograph, Phi Kappa Fraternity, University of Michigan (photocopy). Includes Charles Duer and James Christensen from Grand Rapids. 1935	2	3