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Finding aid for the Avery and Ford Gilleo photographs and letters Collection 476

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

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Source:	Vondra, Joan
Source:	Lown, Patricia
Title:	Avery and Ford Gilleo photographs and letters
ID:	Collection 476
Date [inclusive]:	1911-1919
Physical Description:	2.5 Linear Feet 3 boxes
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Ford Wilcox Gilleo (1891-1975) and Avery Clare Gilleo (1894-1957) were born to Clarence and Gertrude (Wilcox) Gilleo in Lakeview, Michigan. Both men served in World War I in the 126th Infantry, 63rd Brigade of the 32nd Red Arrow Division and returned home after the war. The Avery and Ford Gilleo photographs and letters collection consists primarily of two photo albums documenting training and service in World War I and letters Avery and Ford Gilleo wrote home during the war. Those researching Grand Rapids, Michigan and World War I might find this collection of particular interest.

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Biographical / Historical

Ford Wilcox Gilleo was born in Lakeview, Michigan on 8 June of 1891 to Clarence and Gertrude (Wilcox) Gilleo. Before World War I, Gilleo served in the Michigan National Guard. During World War I he served as a lieutenant, then captain in Company B, 126th Infantry, 63rd Brigade of the 32nd Red Arrow Division. Ford married Mary Katherine Furey (1892-1975) in 1921, in New York and they had three children, Phillip Gilleo (1922-1983), Mary Gilleo Lown (1925-2013) and Anne Gilleo Vondra (1927-2014). Ford and his family resided in New York. Joan Vondra and Patricia Lown, Ford's granddaughters, donated the material for the collection. Ford Gilleo died in Summitville, New York in February of 1975.

Avery Clare Gilleo was born in Lakeview, Michigan on 4 June of 1894 to Clarence and Gertrude (Wilcox) Gilleo. Prior to World War I he joined the Michigan National Guard and, while on duty, attained the rank of first lieutenant, then second lieutenant. During World War I, Gilleo served in France

with the American Expeditionary Forces, Company K, 126th Infantry, 63rd Brigade, 32nd Red Arrow Division. After the war he became a captain. Upon his return from the war, Avery married Eleanore Alten (1896-1994), eldest daughter of well-known Grand Rapids artist, Mathias Alten and Bertha (Schwindt) Alten. Together Avery and Eleanore had two children, Mathias Alten Gilleo (1921-1980) and Anita Marie Gilleo. Avery and Eleanore divorced in 1926. Avery's second wife was Meta E. Baker and together they had one child, Norma Gilleo. Avery Gilleo died in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in January of 1957.

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Scope and Contents

The Avery and Ford Gilleo photographs and letters collection consists primarily of two photo albums documenting training and service in World War I and letters Avery and Ford Gilleo wrote home during their service. Many of the soldiers and locations are identified in the photo albums. Transcriptions Joan Vondra created of Ford's letters, in which she added photographs and contextual notes, have been printed from the digital versions Joan provided upon donation and included in the collection. Ford Gilleo's medals, military insignia and promotional certificates are also part of the collection.

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Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Ford Gilleo's granddaughters, Joan Vondra (daughter of Anne Gilleo Vondra), and Patricia Lown (daughter of Mary Gilleo Lown), donated the material in this collection. The letters were originally saved by Ford Gilleo's younger sister, Flora Gilleo Timm. Flora passed them down to her granddaughter, Sherri Moerland, who gave them to Joan Vondra.

Accessions 2017.090 and 2019.053

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Avery C. Gilleo Collection 198

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Controlled Access Headings

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- World War, 1914-1918
- Families of military personnel -- Michigan -- History
- Vondra, Joan
- Lown, Patricia

Collection Inventory

Letters		
Title/Description	Instances	
Avery Gilleo letters, 1916	Box 1	Folder 1
Avery Gilleo letters, 1917	Box 1	Folder 2-3
Avery Gilleo letters, 1918	Box 1	Folder 4-12
Avery Gilleo letters, 1919	Box 1	Folder 13
Ford Gilleo letters, 1916	Box 1	Folder 14
Ford Gilleo letters, 1917	Box 1	Folder 15-18
Ford Gilleo letters , 1918	Box 1	Folder 19-27

General

Folder 20 contains a letter that includes snapshot photos of training in Texas.

Ford Gilleo letters, 1919	Box 1	Folder 28
Ford Gilleo letters transcriptions, includes notes about the transcriptions, 1916	Box 1	Folder 29

General

Joan Vondra transcribed Ford Gilleo's letters in 2018, adding context and photographs. The donor also provided the library with digital versions.

Ford Gilleo letters transcriptions, 1917	Box 1	Folder 30
Ford Gilleo letters transcriptions, part 1, 1918	Box 1	Folder 31
Ford Gilleo letters transcriptions, part 2, 1918	Box 1	Folder 32
Ford Gilleo letters transcriptions, part 3, 1918	Box 1	Folder 33
Ford Gilleo letters transcriptions, 1919	Box 1	Folder 34

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Photographs

Title/Description	Instances	
Avery and Eleanore (Alten) Gilleo around the time of their marriage in 1920 and an image of an unknown training camp.	Box 2	Folder 1
Photo album with photos taken by Ford and Avery Gilleo at Camp Custer, 1913	Box 2	
Photo album of Army training in the United States, 1916	Box 2	

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Military service recognition

Title/Description	Instances	
Ford Gilleo's military insignia	Box 3	folder 1
Ford Gilleo's military medals, including La Medaille De La Marne	Box 3	folder 2
Ford Gilleo's Michigan National Guard promotion certificates from corporal through first lieutenant, 1911-1917	Box 3	folder 3
Ford Gilleo's course certification in musketry and qualification as assistant instructor, two certificates of appointment to Captain of	Box 3	folder 4

Infantry in The United States Army and in the Officers Reserve
Corps of the Army of the United States, 1917-1921

Ford Gilleo's discharge orders from a military hospital after recovering from typhoid fever and his travel orders, includes transcriptions., 1918-05-28-1918-05-31	Box 3	folder 5
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Newspapers

Title/Description	Instances	
Grand Rapids Herald newspaper clipping; obituary of General Earl Steward, undated	Box 2	folder 1
The Stars and Stripes, official newspaper of the A.E.F, France, 1919-06-13	Box 3	Folder 6

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