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Finding aid for the Grand Rapids Casualties in WWII Collection Collection 493

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Grand Rapids History Center

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URL: <https://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History Center
Title:	Grand Rapids Casualties in WWII Collection
ID:	Collection 493
Date [bulk]:	1941-1945
Physical Description:	0.5 Linear feet (1 Box)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	This collection is comprised of lists of soldiers in various military branches from the Grand Rapids, Michigan area thought to be missing or confirmed deceased between December 7 of 1941 and December 7 of 1945 while fighting in World War II. These lists represent the efforts of a small group of women (namely, Anna S. Sutton (1894-1987)) to accurately represent local casualties in order to add them to a new war memorial in Grand Rapids. This collection could be used to investigate the names and ranks of men from Kent County who were killed in battle or missing in action during World War II, as the name(s) of a soldier's parent(s), sibling, and/or spouse are printed, as well as a home address. Lastly, when known, the area where the soldier was killed is included, even if all that is known is "over Europe" or "Italy."

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Biographical / Historical

During World War II, more than 30,000 men from Kent County, Michigan, enlisted and served in the various branches of the armed forces. To honor those veterans who lost their lives in the war effort, a World War II memorial was petitioned by a citizen group in Grand Rapids. The memorial, in Veteran's Memorial Park (101 E. Fulton St. NE, in the Heartside-Downtown neighborhood of Grand Rapids, Michigan) is dedicated to those whose lives were lost in the war.

This collection is comprised of various lists of men either confirmed deceased or declared missing in action during WWII. The lists range in date beginning December 7, 1941 and ending

December 7, 1945. Alma S. Sutton, the key compiler of the lists, includes soldiers from the Army, Navy, and Marines, as well as the Coast Guard, Merchant Marines, and Canadian Forces.

Some overlap exists among the date ranges represented in this collection, and some redundancy exists among the copies. At times, Sutton is amending lists of young men originally declared missing in action, but later confirmed as killed. The names appear in alphabetical order.s, as well as include, when possible, the full name, rank, and age of each soldier.

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Scope and Contents

The majority of the content included in this collection is lists, which were compiled by Alma Solosth Sutton with the aid of "two fine conscientious girls" from an office in City Hall. The information was typed onto onion-skin paper in the 1940s. Also included in the collection are two separate sets of correspondence from Anna S. Sutton regarding the nature of the lists (dated 1948 and 1972, respectively), which explain that the lists were collated in order to construct the memorials for Veteran's Memorial Park in Grand Rapids.

At times, Alma's handwriting is apparent on the original lists, as are other stray editorial marks. Photocopies of the lists are included with the originals. It is preferential that researchers use the photocopies.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Alma Solosth Sutton was born May 21, 1894 in Michigan; she died in Grand Rapids June 18, 1987 at the age of 93. Both of her parents were from Norway, according to available U.S. Federal Census records. Based on the acquisition date of this collection (1987), it can be inferred this collection was donated to the Grand Rapids Public Library by Florence Quick upon Sutton's death.

This collection was originally accessioned as 1987.029.

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Related Materials

Related Materials

Collection 310: Grand Rapids in World War II collection

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Controlled Access Headings

- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945 -- War work -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History