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## Finding Aid for the World War I diary of Klaas Groothuis collection 535

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This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on June 26, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Prepared by Jennifer Andrew

Grand Rapids History Center

Grand Rapids Public Library

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

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Grand Rapids History Center
<b>Source - dnr:</b>	Smid, Jan Douglas
<b>Title:</b>	World War I diary of Klaas Groothuis
<b>ID:</b>	collection 535
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1918-1919
<b>Physical Description:</b>	.5 Linear Feet 1 small, square box.
<b>Condition Description:</b>	Good.
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	Dutch .
<b>Abstract:</b>	Klaas Groothuis kept this diary during his military service in World War I. Born in 1898 in Loppersum, Netherlands, Klaas immigrated to the United States in 1912, lived and worked as a laborer in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and returned to Europe in 1918 to serve. His diary touches on the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, as well as the Armistice on November 11, 1918, and the influenza pandemic, which killed him in February, 1919. Groothuis is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. His diary may be of interest to researchers comfortable with the Dutch language who are interested in the experience of Dutch immigrants, particularly those who served in World War I. The diary may also be of interest to students or academics who want to translate it as an exercise.

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## Biographical / Historical

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Born in 1898 in Loppersum, Netherlands, Klaas Groothuis immigrated to the United States in July of 1912. According to city directories, Klaas worked as a general laborer, painter, and cement worker in the few years he lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In July of 1918 he boarded a military transport ship in New York as a Private in Company C, 310th Field Signal Battalion National Army. After arriving in Liverpool, England, his company was transported to

France. He died of influenza on February 17, 1919 and was buried in Germany. Eventually he was moved to Arlington National Cemetery and buried there on September 18, 1920.

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## Content Description

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This collection consists solely of the diary kept by Klass Groothuis during the time of his military service in World War I. The diary dates from May 29, 1918 to January 14, 1919 and is written in Dutch. No known English translation exists. Groothuis was involved in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, part of the final Allied offensive of World War I, and he mentions it in his dairy, as well as the Armistice on November 11, 1918 and the influenza pandemic.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open and available for researcher use.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

This diary was donated by Jan D. Smid, whose grandfather, Henry Smid, was the recieipient of the diary when Klaas Groothuis died; accession 2024.062

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- World War, 1914-1918 -- Personal narratives, American
- Dutch Americans -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Smid, Jan Douglas

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## Collection Inventory

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Title/Description	Instances
Diary, 1918-1919	Box 1