

Alma A. Clarke papers

M84

Finding aid prepared by Holly Mengel Melissa Torquato.

Last updated on August 08, 2014.

Bryn Mawr College

2010 January 19

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Summary Information

Repository	Bryn Mawr College
Creator	Clarke, Alma A., 1890-
Title	Alma A. Clarke papers
Call number	M84
Date [inclusive]	1914-1946
Extent	1.66 linear feet (4 containers)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Alma A. Clarke was an American who volunteered in World War I helping French orphans through the Committee France-America for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier and as a Red Cross Auxiliary Nurse in the American Red Cross Military Hospital No. 1 in Neuilly-sur-Seine. The Alma A. Clarke papers provide an in depth view into a World War I nurse's memories and views on her service in France. For the most complete view of Clarke's experiences in France, a researcher should first examine the "Scrapbooks." Researchers interested in World War I, the American Red Cross, nursing in World War I, hospitals in World War I and children as victims of war will find this to be an extremely valuable resource. Not only does this collection reveal Clarke's memories of the War through her collected material, photographs, and documents, it also reveals the way in which both the United States and France promoted their cause through patriotic materials as well as how the countryside and citizens of France were affected by World War I. This collection provides perspective on the War from the viewpoints of children orphaned by the</p>

war, nurses exposed to the long term effects of battle, and the soldiers who did not survive the war without physical wounds.

Cite as:

Alma A. Clarke papers, 1914-1946, Special Collections Department, Bryn Mawr College Library.

Biographical note

Alma A. Clarke was an American who volunteered in World War I, helping French orphans through the Committee France-America for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier and as a Red Cross Auxiliary Nurse in the American Red Cross Military Hospital No. 1 in Neuilly-sur-Seine.

Born June 10, 1890 in Paris to Thomas Shields Clarke and Adelaide Knox, Alma A. Clarke spent her first years living in Paris, France. She had two siblings, Charles John and Beatrice Clarke. As an adult, Alma A. Clarke taught kindergarten before the outbreak of the first World War.

In April of 1917, the United States entered World War I and Clarke volunteered to work in France, under the auspices of the Committee France-America for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, caring for war orphans. She worked at a number of locales, notably the Colonie Franco-Américaine du Château de la Coeur at Chenille, Indre-et-Loire. According to the Committee France-America for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier's "News from France," their work exposed "the depth of human tragedy and need; the condition of the children rescued by hundreds from the newly evacuated French towns is beyond description and there is no limit to the care, support and supplies needed to review this increasing and most terrible suffering," (News from France).

While in France, Clarke's brother, Private Charles J. Clarke, served with the Ordinance Department in the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.). Charles J. Clarke was an artist and he and his sister appear to have remained in contact throughout the war via correspondence and his drawings.

In the fall of 1918, the American Red Cross recruited Clarke to serve as an auxiliary nurse in the American Red Cross Military Hospital No. 1 at Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris. During her service, in Ward 246, Clarke nursed soldiers wounded in battle, largely from the United States, but also from France and Great Britain. Clarke appears to have been a popular nurse and is described as "going about the world doing good in that cheerful way," (Dunk). She served as an auxiliary nurse until June 1919. Throughout the 1930s, Clarke appears to have remained involved in and interested in women's war work and the efforts nurses made during World War I.

Scope and Contents note

The Alma A. Clarke papers provide an in depth view into a World War I nurse's memories and views on her service in France. The collection is arranged in five series: "War Work," "Publications," "Photographs," "Scrapbooks," and "Ephemera." For the most complete view of Clarke's experiences in France, a researcher should first examine the "Scrapbooks."

The "War Work" series is arranged chronologically and includes materials such as official papers allowing her to travel to France and throughout Europe during World War I. It also includes correspondence from the Committee France-American for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier for which she volunteered during 1918 and worked with orphaned children. During her tenure with this group, she collected a great deal of material on children as victims of war as well as brochures and information regarding ways in which to help these children. This series contains correspondence to Alma A. Clarke and to and from her brother, Private Charles J. Clarke. Also included is correspondence that is neither addressed to or signed by anyone in the Clarke family and is therefore titled collected correspondence. Clarke's work as an auxiliary nurse in the American Red Cross is documented in this series through official correspondence and documents as well as examples of medical forms and her notes as a nurse. Clarke appears to have participated in many memorial ceremonies and wartime events, particularly the Inter-Allied Games held at Pershing Stadium in Paris in 1919. Clarke documents the end of World War I and the victory of the Allies with commemorative memorabilia. Correspondence indicates that following the War, Clarke continued her involvement with war work groups, including the Overseas Service League and the American Women War Workers.

Clarke collected documentation regarding World War I and this material is found in "Publications regarding World War I and World War II." Included in this series are publications regarding governmental war relief efforts, and United States home front efforts including instructions for knitting for the troops, a home drying manual for vegetables and fruits, and suggestions for Christmas packages for soldiers. In addition, this series includes newspapers clippings, many in French, from the start of the War in 1914, continuing until 1928 and addressing World War I generally, and on occasion, nursing and the American Red Cross more specifically. Clarke also collected a great many very patriotic images from magazines and other publications as well as postcards (very few of which were sent). Included are publications such as "Handclasp Across the Sea," "American Field Service Bulletin," "Les Annales," and the "Home Sector." Finally, this series includes histories of the American forces in France during World War I, and a front page history of World War II.

The "Photographs" series in this collection includes photographs of Clarke in her various volunteer positions and with her brother, Private Charles J. Clarke. However, this series does not document only Clarke's role in the War, but also includes her more general observations of a country at war. Included are photographs of the children whom she cared for via the Committee France-America for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier, soldiers in the field, the hospitals in which she worked, wounded soldiers, her fellow nurses, and the armistice celebrations following the peace. It appears that Clarke participated in a tour of the battlefields in the area of Château Thierry-Soissons, circa 1919, (see Box 1, Folder 9) and it is probable that the photographs of war destruction, battlefields and cemeteries are from this trip. Finally,

the series contains photographs of maneuvers of American forces in Germany in 1921. Many of these photographs are copies of those contained within the "Scrapbooks," and are frequently identified in the scrapbooks.

The "Scrapbooks" series is the culmination of all the other series and, in fact, a fair amount of the information in the other series is duplicates of material pasted into the scrapbooks. This series consists of two scrapbooks, one detailing Clarke's work with the orphaned children in France during her volunteering with the Committee France-America for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier; and the other detailing her work as an auxiliary nurse with the American Red Cross Military Hospital No. 1 in Neuilly-sur-Seine. In both cases, these scrapbooks contain a general, publicized view of the Allies and World War I through clippings and collected material. However, in addition, these scrapbooks contain intimate and personal memories of the War, not just Clarke's memories, but the memories, writings, and art of the orphaned children and wounded soldiers cared for by Clarke. Included in the Committee France-America for the Protection of the Children of the Frontier Scrapbook (Box 3), researchers will find documents regarding Clarke's volunteering, travel to France, and arrival in France. Researchers will also find photographs of the children, their nurses, and their games. Clarke documents the children being evacuated in April 1918 and the Child Welfare Exhibit of the American Red Cross held in Lyon in that same month. Included are ration cards, correspondence to Clarke, patriotic post cards, post cards regarding children of the War, clippings, and drawings and letters by children. The scrapbook documenting Clarke's activities as an auxiliary nurse in American Red Cross Military Hospital No. 1 in Neuilly-sur-Seine (Box 4) is equally intimate and personal. This scrapbook contains photographs of wounded soldiers, hospitals with patients in hallways, and medical staff; drawings and poems created by patients; patriotic clippings; and examples of medical forms and cards. Of particular note in this scrapbook is the record Clarke kept of patients, who wrote, in their own hands, their name, hometown and outfit, the locations of their battles and how they were wounded. Much of the material in the scrapbooks can be found elsewhere in the collection, but the materials are most likely to be identified in the scrapbooks.

The final series of this collection is "Ephemera" which includes two match box covers from Alsace and Ypres and a Joan of Arc pennant.

Researchers interested in World War I, the American Red Cross, nursing in World War I, hospitals in World War I and children as victims of war will find this to be an extremely valuable resource. Not only does this collection reveal Clarke's memories of the War through her collected material, photographs, and documents, it also reveals the way in which both the United States and France promoted their cause through patriotic materials as well as how the countryside and citizens of France were affected by World War I. This collection provides perspective on the War from the viewpoints of children orphaned by the war, nurses exposed to the long term effects of battle, and the soldiers who did not survive the war without physical wounds.

Administrative Information

Bryn Mawr College

2010 January 19

Finding aid prepared by Holly Mengel Melissa Torquato.

Sponsor

The processing of this collection was made possible through generous funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, administered through the Council on Library and Information Resources' "Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives" Project.

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use note

Copyright restrictions may apply. Please contact the Archives with requests for copying and for authorization to publish, quote or reproduce the material.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Gift of Miss Cynthia A. Clarke, December 16, 1977.

Processing Information note

The processing of this collection was made possible through generous funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, administered through the Council on Library and Information Resources' "Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives" Project.

This collection was *minimally processed* in 2009-2011, as part of an experimental project conducted under the auspices of the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries to help eliminate processing backlog in Philadelphia repositories. A minimally processed collection is one processed at a less intensive rate than traditionally thought necessary to make a collection ready for use by researchers. When citing sources from this collection, researchers are advised to defer to folder titles provided in the finding aid rather than those provided on the physical folder.

Employing processing strategies outlined in Mark Greene's and Dennis Meissner's 2005 article, *More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal With Late 20th-Century Collections*, the project team tested the limits of minimal processing on collections of all types and ages, in 23 Philadelphia area repositories. A primary goal of the project, the team processed at an average rate of 2-3 hours per linear foot of records, a fraction of the time ordinarily reserved for the arrangement and description of collections. Among other time saving strategies, the project team did not extensively review the content of the collections, replace acidic folders or complete any preservation work.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- American Red Cross.

Form/Genre(s)

- Correspondence.
- Itineraries
- Military passes
- Passports
- Photographs.
- Postcards
- Scrapbooks
- Souvenir programs

Geographic Name(s)

- Neuilly-sur-Seine (France)
- Paris (France)

Personal Name(s)

- Clarke, Charles John
- Remington, Beatrice Clarke

Subject(s)

- Child welfare
- Nurses
- Orphans
- Refugees
- Serial publications

- War work
- Women in medicine
- World War I Nurse
- World War, 1914-1918

Series I. War Work

Collection Inventory

Series I. War Work, 1917-1919.

	Box	Folder
Official Documents including passports and letters of permission, circa 1917.	1	1
Comité Franco-Américain pour la Protection des Enfants de la Frontière correspondence, 1918.	1	2
Children as War Victims material, circa 1918.	1	3
Drawings created by French children, circa 1918.	1	4
Distinctive Signs of Rank and Insignia of Principal Allied Armies, 1918.	1	5
Correspondence to Alma A. Clarke, 1918-1919.	1	6
Correspondence to and from Private Charles J. Clarke, 1918-1919.	1	7
Collected Correspondence, circa 1918.	1	8
American Red Cross correspondence and official documents, 1918-1920.	1	9
American Red Cross Sample Stationary, undated.	1	10
American Red Cross Nursing Documents (including medical forms, notes and reading material (non-medical) from the American Military Hospital Library), undated.	1	11
Church and Prayer Services, 1918-1926.	1	12

Series II. Publications regarding World War I and World War II

Wartime Events (bulk Inter-Allied Games), 1918-1919.	1	13
Victory Material, 1918.	1	14
Grand Quartier Américain du Corps Expéditionnaire travel papers, 1919.	1	15
Overseas Service League materials (including bylaws, correspondence, newsletters and programs), 1919-1930.	1	16
American Women War Workers program, undated.	1	17
Calling cards, undated.	1	18
Post-War Memorial Programs, 1919, undated.	1	19-20

Series II. Publications regarding World War I and World War II, 1914-1945.

	Box	Folder
Governmental War Relief Efforts, 1914-1916.	1	21
Home Front Efforts in the United States, circa 1917.	1	22
Newspaper Clippings, 1914-1917.	1	23
Newspaper Clippings, 1918.	1	24
Newspaper Clippings, 1919.	1	25
Newspaper Clippings, 1921-1928.	1	26
Newspaper Clippings, undated.	1	27
Postcards and Images, 1914-1918.	1	28-29

Series III. Photographs

"Handclasp Across the Sea", 1918 September 15.	1	30
"The Red Cross Magazine", 1918 November.	1	31
"American Field Service Bulletin", 1918-1919.	1	32
"Les Annales" and "The Home Sector", 1919.	1	33
"The Story of the Second A.E.F.: The Army of Remembrance" (2 copies), 1927.	1	34
"The Story of the Second A.E.F.: The Army of Remembrance, Auxiliary Edition", undated.	1	35
"Memorial des Allies", undated.	1	36
"Front Page History of the Second World War," published by the New York Herald Tribune, 1946.	1	37

Series III. Photographs, 1917-1921.

	Box	Folder
Alma A. Clarke with her brother Private Charles J. Clarke, 1918 July 13.	2	3
Alma A. Clarke with children, circa 1917.	2	1-2
General Pershing, circa 1918.	2	4
Soldiers, circa 1918.	2	5
Hospitals, nurses, and wounded soldiers, circa 1918.	2	6
Armistice Celebrations, 1918.	2	7

Series IV. Scrapbooks

War destruction, battlefields and cemeteries (probably during tour sponsored by American Red Cross), circa 1919.	2	8-9
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Related Archival Materials note

Please see Box 1, Folder 9, for more information on this trip.

Maneuvers of American Forces in Germany, 1921 September.	2	10
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Series IV. Scrapbooks, 1917-1919.

	Box	Volume
Committee Franco-American for the Protection of Children of the Frontier, 1917-1918.	3	1
American Red Cross Military Hospital, No. 1, Ward 246, Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1918-1919.	4	1

Series V. Ephemera.

	Box	Object
Match box covers (2) from Alsace and Ypres, circa 1914-1918.	4	1-2
Joan of Arc pennant, undated.	4	3