

Bernice E. Payne letters

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1918-1919

Title Statement

Bernice E. Payne lettersGuide to the Bernice E. Payne letters MS 00297

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS 00297

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/8567

Unit Date

1918-1919

Language

English

Creator

Payne, Bernice E. (Bernice Edward)

Extent

0.21 Linear Feet 1 half Hollinger box.

Repository

Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains letters predominately from Bernice Edward Payne, of Roaring Springs, Texas, to his parents, Macon L. and Mattie S. Payne, and sister, Eunice Payne. Bernice Payne, a white man, served in the US Army during World War I. He began his initial training at Camp Travis, Texas as a private in the Quartermaster Corps. After successfully passing his examinations, Payne began to oversee the 322nd Labor Battalion Quartermaster Corps, an all-African American battalion. He was soon promoted to sergeant and was transferred along with the 322nd Labor Battalion to Camp Hill in Newport News, Virginia.

Letters addressed to his family reveal Payne's appreciation for his position and gratitude for not having to serve in an infantry battalion. While responsible for a group of all-African American soldiers, Payne writes in his letters that he mostly interacts with his fellow white officers and sergeants. This segregation of race and rank, is highlighted in the separate barracks and mess halls reserved solely for Payne and other white soldiers.

Following his time at Camp Hill, Payne is transferred to Termes, Ardennes, France. Letters from January 1919 onward describe his experiences in Europe, but the collection primarily consists of accounts of his training in Texas and Virginia. Occasionally, letters are supplemented by writings from someone else, perhaps his mother or sister, drafting replies to him or forwarding his letters to other relatives. Also included in this collection is an undated telegram, presumably from Europe, with neither a sender nor recipient name.

Keywords

World War, 1914-1918

Newport News (Va.)

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans--History--20th century

Quartermasters--United States

World War, 1914-1918--France

Racism

United States. Army

Description of Subordinate Components

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336626

Unit Date 1918 June 24 - 28

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336627

Unit Date 1918 June 30 - July 7

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 2 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336628

Unit Date 1918 July 10 - 15

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 3 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336629

Unit Date 1918 July 15 - 22

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 4 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336630

Unit Date 1918 July 23 - 29

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 5 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336631

Unit Date 1918 August 1 - 9

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 6 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336632

Unit Date 1918 August 14 - 19

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 7 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336633

Unit Date 1919 January 6 - February 27

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 8 (folder)

Letters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336634

Unit Date 1919 April 23 and undated

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 9 (folder)

Telegram

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/336635

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 10 (folder)