A Guide to the William Harry Clarke Collection, 1935-1946

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History

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

Ms2021-207

Language

Materials in this collection are in English.

Creator

William Harry Clarke, Jr and Ruth Gilmore Clarke

Physical Characteristics

3 boxes

Repository

West Virginia State Archives, Charleston, West Virginia

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Custodial History

The entirety of this collection was donated by William Harry Clarke III, the son of Chaplain William Harry Clarke and Ruth Clarke. It was acquired by the West Virginia Archives and History in June of 2021.

Administrative Information

Transferred to Museums

- Framed Portrait, William Henry Clarke
- Framed Portrait, William Harry Clarke
- Swastika armband
- Upholstery from chair of Herman Goering, Berchtesgaden, June 1945
- Dogtags, patches, and military insignia
- Chaplain's flag, which flew from jeep in Europe, 1945-1946

Biographical/Historical Note

William Harry Clarke, Jr. was born in Huntington, West Virginia, in March of 1913. He and his wife, Ruth Gilmore, born in 1914, met as teenagers at Temple Baptist Church, while attending high school together at Huntington High School. Both graduated from Marshall College.

A vast majority of these letters were written during the time of World War II when Clarke resigned from pastoring at the Highland Park Baptist Church to serve with the 9th Army in England, France, and Germany. William Harry Clarke, Jr. and Ruth Gilmore Clarke had a son named William Harry Clarke III also known as "Sonny." Ruth and Sonny visited the Chaplain during his schooling at Harvard until he was shipped overseas. As a result, they moved to Portsmouth, Virginia to be with Ruth's parents while Chaplain Clarke served out his time with the military. Some of the letters are written from Huntington.

Scope and Content

This collection includes correspondence between Chaplain William Harry Clarke to his wife and son Ruth and William Harry Clarke III (Sonny). The correspondence occurred during World War II with Chaplain Clarke being stationed overseas in various places ranging from Paris to Berlin, while the family was in the United States. In addition, there are miscellaneous items, religious pamphlets, associated photographs, drawings by "Sonny," etc. The main components of this collection are:

- Correspondence between Chaplain William Harry Clarke and Ruth Clarke, his wife (1935-1946).
- Correspondence between Chaplain William Harry Clarke and William Harry Clarke III (Sonny), his son.
- Miscellaneous correspondence sent to Chaplain William Harry Clarke.
- Photographs of his wife and son, and military exploits while in the service and overseas.
- Miscellaneous newspaper clippings.
- Scenes from post-war Germany (or Europe).

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