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Abstract


Accession No.: H88-0239.5
Provenance: Polar Bear Oral History Project
Donor: Hope College History Department
Photographs: 24 images
Processed by: Craig Wright, February 1991
Catherine Jung, April 2007

History

The Polar Bear Oral History Project documents the American intervention in the Russian Civil War from the viewpoints of local survivors of the American Expeditionary Force, North Russia, 1918-1919. Since these men participated in actions in the Archangel region, there are no materials in the collection which pertain to American activities in the Far East near Vladivostok. American forces involved in this conflict were known as “polar bears.”

The project was supervised by Dr. G. Larry Penrose of the History Department. Three students, Nancy Johnson, Deborah Lenning and Glen Johnson, interviewed fifteen veterans of the 339th Infantry Regiment and 310th Engineers Regiment from the summer of 1977 to the fall of 1979.

Scope and Content

The Polar Bear Oral History Project records consist of materials from 1910 to 1985, the bulk of which document the project itself and cover the years 1977 to 1979. Included are interview transcripts, cassette tapes, articles, bibliographies, diaries, clippings, photographs, microfilm and a book. The folders have been arranged alphabetically by topical headings.

Note: legal releases were not obtained from veterans Walter Bushaw and John Volkers. Their materials are RESTRICTED.

Container List

Box 1
**The American Sentinel**, Newspaper, 1918-1919 (copies) (see Box 2)

Articles, 1926-1991
- Doolen, Richard M. “Michigan’s Polar Bears: The American Expedition to North Russia,” 1965


- Loewenstein, Karl. “American Intervention in Northern Russia: The Impressions of the American Soldier,” 1991 (student paper)
- MacMorland, Major General Edward E. “Our First War with the Russians,” 1951
- Moore, Lieutenant Colonel Joel R. “The North Russian Expedition: The 85th Division’s Participation,” 1926

**Wisconsin Magazine of History**, vol. 62, no. 3, 1979
- Feist, Joe Michael, ed. “Railways and Politics: The Russian Diary of George Gibbs, 1917”

- Clark, Roger Sherman, n.d., 1919 (copies - originals at the Bentley Historical Library)
- Correspondence, 1977-1979
- Diaries, 1918-1919
  - Anonymous, Company E, 1918-1919
  - Arkins, Edwin L., Company C, 1918-1919
  - Siplon, James, Company I, 1918-1919
- General Information, n.d., 1918-1920
- Letter, 1950
- Interviews, 1977-1979
  - Bartels, Levi, 1978 (RESTRICTED)
  - Bushaw, Walter, 1977 (RESTRICTED)
  - Colburn, Cleo Merritt, 1977
  - Grace, Charles W., 1977 (1 image)
  - Hershberger, Russell W., 1977 (1 image)
  - Kemperman, Radus H., 1977
  - Kooyers, Frederick M., 1977 (1 image)
  - Larsen, Alfred M., 1977 (1 image)
  - Lewis, Floyd, 1977
  - Marxer, Rudolph, 1977
  - Petropolous, George, 1977
Rotman, Martin, 1978
Siplon, James, 1977 (1 image)
Slagh, Albert J., Rough Draft, 1978
Volkers, John, 1978 (RESTRICTED)
Maps, n.d. (see Box 2)
Photographs, n.d., 1910, 1918, 1977 (19 images)
Polar Bear Association, 1940-1977
   General, n.d., 1977
   Membership list, n.d.
   Programs, 1940-1962
Audiotape Cassettes/Digital, 1977-1978
   Bartels, Levi, 6/12/78
   Colburn, Cleo, 6/17/77
   Grace, Charles, 6/14/77 (2 tapes)
   Hershberger, Russell, 6/20/77
   Kemperman, Radus, 6/23/77
   Kooyers, Fred, 6/8/77
   Larsen, Alfred, 6/13/77 (2 tapes)
   Lewis, Floyd, 6/29/77 (2 tapes)
   Lewis, Floyd, 7/11/77
   Marxer, Rudolph, 6/16/77 (2 tapes)
   Rotman, Martin, 6/13/78
   Siplon, James, 6/29/77, 7/6/77 (3 tapes)
   Slagh, Albert J., 6/12/78
Photograph, “Camp Custer, Michigan,” 1917 (oversize)

Box 2

*The American Sentinel*, Newspaper, 1918-1919 (copies)
Maps, n.d.