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Guide to the Helen L. Drew Correspondence 1917-1920



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Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.DREW
Title	Drew, Helen L.. Correspondence
Date	1917-1920
Size	0.5 linear feet (1 box)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Helen L. Drew received her M. A. degree in English from the University of Chicago in 1915. She was appointed an instructor in English at Wellesley College in 1917 and in 1919 joined the faculty of Rockford College. The Helen L. Drew Correspondence consists of thirty-seven letters which Miss Drew received from a group of her friends, mainly graduate students with whom she had studied in the English Department at the University, during and shortly after World War I.

Acknowledgments

Information on Use

Access

No restrictions.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Drew, Helen L.. Correspondence, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Helen L. Drew received her M. A. degree in English from the University of Chicago in 1915. She was appointed an instructor in English at Wellesley College in 1917 and in 1919 joined the faculty of Rockford College.

Scope Note

The Helen L. Drew Correspondence consists of thirty-seven letters which Miss Drew received from a group of her friends, mainly graduate students with whom she had studied in the English Department at the University, during World War I and shortly thereafter [1917-1920].

Apart from such experiences, Helen Drew's correspondents primarily portray day-to-day happenings: Mrs. Hyman's trials working in Harper Library, news and gossip about friends and family--engagements, illnesses, daily activities. The letters, taken as a whole, provide personal and often intimate glimpses into the lives of a group of friends at the University against the backdrop of the First World War.

Among the correspondents are faculty member Edith Foster Flint and fellow students Fred B. Millet and Frank O'Hara. Others mentioned in the correspondence include Howard Mumford Jones, Robert Morss Lovett, Rollin D. Salisbury (Miss Drew's uncle), and Elizabeth Wallace.

Army life is described by Ralph C. Lommen whose twenty-three letters account for two-thirds of the collection. Lommen was a member of the U. S. Army Ambulance Service [1917-1918] and later a student at the Army Medical School [1918-1919] in Washington, D. C. The army was a frustrating and discouraging experience for Lommen: he complained that life in the ambulance service, based first in Lexington Barracks on the University campus and later in Allentown, Pennsylvania, was dull and monotonous, offering no opportunities for individual glory and acts of heroism. A major event was receiving comfort kits, "complete to pencil and playing cards," from the University's women's war-service club. Army Medical School, while it renewed Lommen's interest in science and medicine, did not allow him to pursue other interests, and his letters frequently express the frustration of an individual whose education and career were both disrupted and furthered by military service.

Other correspondents describe the impact of the war on the University. Irene Hyman wrote in October of 1918,

College! God save the mark, you would not recognize. The old air is gone--gone completely! There is a spirit of unrest, an air of hurry and hustle and confusion worse confounded. No one seems to have their bearings, professors or students. Classes are all mixed up ... The campus itself is different--groups of soldiers drilling--bugle calls ringing at odd times.

As an example of the effect of the military on the classroom, Mrs. Hyman cited English I: "No long themes, no card notes, much more oral work and the topics assigned are all work topics. ... Instructors will have to give lessons in pronunciation of Eng[lish]; that to be done in the form of commands--such as 'Present-arms! Company Right Face!' etc."

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Subject Headings

- Drew, Helen Louisa.
- Letters (correspondence).

INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder 1

Edith Foster Elint [1918]

Box 1

Folder 2

Irene Hyman [1918]

Box 1

Folder 3

Ralph G. Lommen 1917

Box 1

Folder 4

Ralph G. Lommen, 1918-1919

Box 1

Folder 5

Mary MacDonald [1917-1920]

Box 1

Folder 6

Fred B. Millet [1919]