Franz X. Gabl papers, 1917-2000

Overview of the Collection

Creator Gabl, Franz X.
Title Franz X. Gabl papers
Dates 1917-2000 (inclusive)
1917 2000
Quantity 0.5 Linear Ft., ()
Collection Number XOE_CPNWS0036gabl (collection)
Summary The collection documents Olympic medalist Franz X. Gabl’s career and interests as a professional skier and ski instructor in Europe, Canada and the Pacific Northwest from his early youth to 2000. Gabl’s achievements and involvement in winter sports are represented including his work for the annual Ski to Sea race from Mt. Baker to Bellingham Bay in Washington State. Gabl’s experiences in the German army during World War II, where he served on the Russian Front from 1941-1945, are also included in the collection.
Repository Western Washington University, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies
Goltz-Murray Archives Building
808 25th St.
Bellingham, WA
98225
Telephone: 360-650-7534
cpnws@wwu.edu
Access Restrictions The collection is open to the public.
Languages English, German
Sponsor Funding for preparing this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Funding for encoding the finding aid was awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Franz X. Gabl was born in Austria in 1921. He was an avid downhill skier and mountain climber who found great satisfaction in racing and competition. After Nazi Germany annexed Austria in 1938 Gabl found himself drafted into the army and sent to the Russian Front from 1941 to 1945. After becoming a prisoner of war in a Russian-controlled camp Gabl escaped and made his way back to his hometown of St. Anton in 1945.

Having survived the harrowing experience of World War II, Gabl went on to win a Silver Medal for Downhill Skiing at the 1948 Winter Olympics in St. Moritz, Switzerland. After competing for a number of years he found a job in British Columbia as a ski instructor. Gabl then went on to become the head coach of the Canadian Olympic Ladies Ski Team in 1952 and the Men’s Ski Team in 1956. After settling in Washington State, Gabl became instrumental in initiating Whatcom County’s annual Ski-to-Sea race in 1973. Upon retirement Franz X. Gabl settled in Bellingham, Washington.
Content Description

The collection documents Olympic medalist Franz X. Gabl’s career and interests as a professional skier and ski instructor in Europe, Canada and the Pacific Northwest. The collection contains photographs, newspaper clippings, certificates, and correspondence reflecting Gabl’s achievements and involvement in winter sports from the 1940s through the 1980s. Also included are materials relating to his involvement in the annual Ski to Sea race from Mt. Baker to Bellingham Bay in Washington State.

The collection also contains photographs documenting Gabl’s experiences in the German army during World War II, where he served on the Russian Front from 1941-45. A copy of his autobiography is also included in the collection.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation
Franz X. Gabl papers, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Heritage Resources, Western Washington University, Bellingham WA 98225-9123.

Administrative Information

Arrangement
The Franz X. Gabl papers are organized in accordance with the following series arrangement:

Series I - World War II Materials, 1917-1945
Series II - Skiing Activities, 1926-2000
Series III - Ski to Sea, approximately 1960s-1991
Series IV - Autobiographical Materials, 2000

Custodial History
Franz X. Gabl donated the materials to the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies in May of 2002.

Bibliography

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series I:  World War II Materials, 1917-1945
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Container(s)</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>Photographs (Austria and Russia)</td>
<td>1917; approximately 1941-1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>Map for military mission on Russian Front</td>
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**Series II: Skiing Activities, 1926-2000**

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<tr>
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<td>Photographs - Austria and Europe</td>
<td>approximately 1926-1949; approximately 1980s</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>Photographs - Canada and United States</td>
<td>approximately 1952-2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>German Language Newspaper Clippings</td>
<td>approximately 1940s</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/6</td>
<td>Newspaper Clippings</td>
<td>approximately 1950s-1960s; 1982</td>
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<td>Certificates</td>
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**Series III: Ski to Sea, approximately 1960s-1991**

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<tr>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1978; undated</td>
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<td>1/9</td>
<td>Photographs and Postcards</td>
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### Series IV: Autobiographical Materials, 2000

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### Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms:**
- Skis and skiing -- Europe -- History -- Sources.
- Skis and skiing -- Washington (State) -- Baker, Mount -- History -- Sources.
- Winter Olympics (5th : 1948 : St. Moritz, Switzerland) -- History -- Sources.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Campaigns -- Eastern Front -- History -- Sources.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Campaigns -- Russia -- History -- Sources.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Prisoners and prisons, Russian -- History -- Sources.

**Personal Names:**
- Gabl, Franz X.--Archives.

**Titles within the Collection:**
- Franzl II: From 4 Years on the Russian Front, 1941-45, To Standing On The Olympic Podium in 1948

Finding aid created by Jason Viers
October 2004