Overview of the Collection

Creator    Morrison, Harry William, 1888-1937
Title       Harry William Morrison Papers
Dates       1916-1937 (inclusive)
            1916  1937
Quantity    0.75 cubic feet, (1 oversize flat box)
Collection Number    MS.90
Summary    Harry William Morrison was a trombone player in a military band during the First World War. This collection consists of his diaries, writings, and a photograph album, mostly relating to his service in France and Germany between 1918-1919.
Repository     Pacific University, Archives
Pacific University Archives
2043 College Way
Forest Grove, OR
97116
Telephone: 503-352-1400
archives@pacificu.edu
Access Restrictions    Collection is open for research.
Languages    English
Sponsor    Sponsored by a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission

Biographical Note

Harry William Morrison was a trombone player in a military band during the First World War (91st Division, 166th Brigade, 348th Field Artillery Regiment, Band Section). He kept a detailed diary during his service in France and Germany from 1918-1919.

Born in upstate New York on August 25, 1888, Morrison moved to the Rainier area of Washington state around 1910. He found work there as a bookkeeper for a lumber mill, the "Columbia River Door Co.,” which was owned by a step-uncle. In 1916, Morrison was convicted of embezzling “divers gold and silver coins, paper currency and bank bills” from the mill, and was sentenced to one year in prison at the Oregon State Penitentiary. He later maintained that he had taken the fall for someone else in the company.

In early 1918, several months after being paroled, Morrison obtained a pardon from the governor in order to enlist in the army. A trombone player, he joined the Band Section of the 348th Field Artillery Regiment, in the 166th Brigade of the 91st Division. He trained at Camp Lewis, Washington, and then travelled by train to New York. From there, he shipped on the British S.S. Coronia to Liverpool, and went from there to Le Havre. Once in France, his Section always appears to have been posted some 20 to 50 miles behind the front, which they followed from Verdun through Belgium, Luxembourg and into Germany. They participated in drills, gave band concerts and visited local cafes. Though never exposed to the front lines, Morrison saw many wounded soldiers and witnessed the outbreak of the
Spanish Flu. Once in Germany, he was billeted with a friendly German family named the Moselers. In March of 1919, his regiment returned to the United States.

After the war, Morrison had difficulty finding work. He married a school teacher, Marie Agnes Gallagher, who came from a Catholic family in Tacoma. They moved to Oregon, where Morrison found off-and-on work in the timber industry and as a house painter. They eventually settled in Hillsboro and had six children. At the age of 48, in the midst of the Great Depression, Morrison died of appendicitis that had been misdiagnosed.

Content Description

This collection consists of diaries, writings, and a photograph album, mostly relating to Harry William Morrison's military service in World War I. The diaries date from June 30, 1918 to April 20, 1919, covering the period after he left training camp until his return from the war. There is an entry for nearly every day, ranging in length from a single sentence to several paragraphs. He generally writes in a candid style, recording his poor opinions of army food and transportation, as well as his appreciation for the sights and customs of Europe. In an entry describing conditions on the ship from New York to England, for example, he writes:

"Dinner consisted of cabbage & bread which was not fit for a hog. Quarters on next to lower deck. Stinks so bad one can hardly stay below. Supper, frozen sau[s]age & bread, as bad as dinner. Are to sail tomorrow morning. Slept on deck, could not stand it below. Crew as rotten as grub."

At the close of the war when he was billeted with a friendly German family, he wrote:

"The people we are living with are fine. Name Moseler. [...] Mrs. Moseler came in and talked to Matil and l in the afternoon, the conversation drifted around to the war. We could plainly see they had been kept in ignorance, about all they had ever heard, was what great victories the Germans were gaining, never of defeat. When we told her of the cruelties practiced on the Belgiums she was horrified [...]."

In addition to making daily entries in his diary, Morrison also recorded details such as the price of clothes and food, and descriptions of tourist sites. Some of the tourist information may have been copied from book, “Guide to the Rhine,” which is included in this collection. He also recorded taking 22 film rolls worth of photographs. Many of these photographs, along with postcards that he purchased, are in the photograph album in this collection. The images depict subjects such as his band, other soldiers, airplanes, battle landscapes, military trains, cities (some bombed, some intact), tourist sights, artillery, members of the Moseler Family, military camps and transport ships. Approximately 125 original photographs and 75 postcards are present in the album.

Also in this collection is a revised copy of his diary, which Morrison probably wrote in the 1930s. He may have intended to publish it, but it was never completed; it ends on January 20, 1919. There is also a notebook containing an antiwar speech, a fragment of a play with populist themes, and a Christmas story about a "Red Elf" that was probably intended for Morrison's children. A folder of photocopied documents, mostly from the Oregon State Archives, provide information about his incarceration in 1916 and his death in 1937.

The collection was donated by his daughter-in-law, Geraldine Morrison, who attended Pacific University in the late 1940s. Harry’s son, Donald Edward Morrison, was a Pacific graduate and president of his senior class in 1950.
Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

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Preferred Citation

Harry William Morrison Papers, Pacific University Archives, Forest Grove, Oregon.

Administrative Information

Future Additions

Additional materials from the Morrison Family are expected to be donated to this collection.

Detailed Description of the Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original diary, first volume</td>
<td>30 Jun 1918 - 14 Dec 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original diary, second volume</td>
<td>31 Dec 1918 - 20 Apr 1919</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised diary, ending on 20 Jan 1919</td>
<td>1930s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photograph and Postcard Album</td>
<td>1918-1919</td>
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| Notebook
dIncludes an antiwar speech; a fragment of a play with populist/antiwar themes titled "What's the Use"; and a Christmas story written for his children about a "Red Elf." | 1930s              |
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<tr>
<td>Photocopied documents about Morrison</td>
<td>1916-1937</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copies of legal documents about Morrison's incarceration on embezzlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>charges and subsequent pardon, and a copy of his death certificate. Most of</td>
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<td>these were copied from originals in the Oregon State Archives.</td>
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**Find Related Collections**

**Subject Terms:**
- United States. Army--Bands.
- World War, 1914-1918--Personal narratives

**Form or Genre Terms:**
- Diaries
- Photograph albums