

Guide to the Ruth Adele Williams Papers

MS 1863



compiled by Richard V. Szary

November 2005

Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
(203) 432-7441

beinecke.library@yale.edu

<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Collection Overview | 3 |
| Requesting Instructions | 3 |
| Administrative Information | 3 |
| Immediate Source of Acquisition | 3 |
| Conditions Governing Access | 4 |
| Conditions Governing Use | 4 |
| Preferred Citation | 4 |
| Biographical / Historical | 4 |
| Scope and Contents | 4 |
| Collection Contents | 6 |
| Selected Search Terms | 7 |

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
(203) 432-7441
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

CALL NUMBER: MS 1863

CREATOR: Williams, Ruth Adele, 1900-

TITLE: Ruth Adele Williams papers

DATES: ca. 1918-1923

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.5 linear feet

LANGUAGE: The Antoine Mahaut correspondence and memoir are in French. An English translation of the memoir, done by Ruth Williams, is also included.

SUMMARY: The papers consist of letters written by three Belgian soldiers, Gustave Bleikertz, Georges Carlier, and Antoine Mahaut to Ruth Adele Williams from 1918 through 1920; a memoir written by Mahaut and a scrapbook of postcards that he sent to Williams. Biographical information and a photograph of Williams are included.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1863>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1863>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Susan A. D'Ambrosio, 2005.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright for unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by Ruth Adele Williams has been transferred to Yale University. These materials may be used for non-commercial purposes without seeking permission from Yale University as the copyright holder. For other uses of these materials, please contact beinecke.library@yale.edu.

Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Ruth Adele Williams Papers (MS 1863). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Ruth Adele Williams was born in San Francisco in 1900. She attended the Randolph School for Girls in Berkeley, California, where she became fluent in French. Following her graduation in 1918, she entered the nursing program at the University of California at Berkeley. While at Berkeley, she began corresponding with three Belgian soldiers through the auspices of the Belgian Relief Organization and continued this correspondence through 1920.

Scope and Contents

The Ruth Adele Williams Papers consist of correspondence, a memoir, and memorabilia sent to her as a "pen pal" by three Belgian soldiers during World War I.

Ruth Adele Williams attended the Randolph School for Girls in Berkeley, California, where French was a required subject from grade two through grade twelve. During World War I, the local Belgian relief organization perhaps asked if the girls would correspond with Belgian soldiers. After graduation from the school in May 1918, Williams entered the University of California at Berkeley in September and started corresponding with three Belgian soldiers, Gustave Bleikertz, Georges Carlier, and Antoine Mahaut, continuing until 1920. Gustave Bleikertz was from Antwerp. He wrote in English and sent letters and postcards including one from the Belgian Congo in 1920. In one letter he included a photo of himself. He was gassed during the war and lost his sight for six weeks. Georges Carlier also wrote in English and described a visit to Verdun. Occasionally he used stationery which had colored prints of soldiers' everyday activities. Georges was studying in preparation for an exam in order to enter a mining and electronics school in Liège. He knew Antoine Mahaut and explained that Antoine had learned to write during the war which explained the faulty syntax and spelling. Antoine, born in Arlon but living in Charleroi at the start of the war, wrote the greatest number of letters, forty or more, sent many postcards, and after the war, sent his handwritten memoirs of the war to Williams dedicated, "For My very Dear Little American Sister, Antoine Mahaut, 10er Ft de ligne, 12er Comp. de Mitrailleur, 3rd Batallion, Arlon, Belgique, Your Little Brother of Belgium who forgets you not - A. Mahaut." Williams was able to correspond in French and translated his memoirs, but not the letters. During the course of the correspondence, in 1919, Williams entered the rigorous nurse's training at U.C. and one of the soldiers wondered if she was ill as she often mentioned how tired she was in her letters. Also the French word she used for "nurse" caused some confusion as the soldiers understood her to mean that she was nursing an infant and they were surprised

to learn that she was a "mama." Ultimately the situation was cleared up and one of the soldiers wrote to her the French word to use that meant she was training in the medical field.

Collection Contents

| | |
|------------|---|
| b. 1, f. 1 | "Early life of Ruth Adele Williams" [typed biographical notes] |
| | Graduation picture of Ruth Adele Williams [scanned and printed from original kept by family] |
| b. 1, f. 2 | Belgian Relief Organization correspondence |
| | Bleikertz, Gustave |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Correspondence |
| b. 1, f. 4 | Postcards |
| b. 1, f. 5 | Carlier, Georges, correspondence |
| | Mahaut, Antoine |
| b. 1, f. 6 | Correspondence [in French] |
| b. 1, f. 7 | Memoir [original, in French] |
| b. 1, f. 8 | Memoir [English translation by Ruth Williams] |
| b. 1, f. 9 | Scrapbook of postcards, including scenes from Belgium sites, including Geldern, Bruxelles, Oostende, Arlon, Dixmude (showing war damage), Anvers, Eischen, Liège (war damage), Antwerp, as well as postcards from Germany, Paris, and Luxembourg. Some have pictures of the King of Belgium, Woodrow Wilson. One is from the Belgian Congo. |

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Soldiers -- Belgium -- Correspondence
World War, 1914-1918
World War, 1914-1918 -- Personal narratives,
French

Names

Williams, Ruth Adele, 1920-