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Robert Whitlow papers

Arkansas State University - Jonesboro

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Finding Aid of

ROBERT WHITLOW PAPERS

1945-1987

NEAD 001

Archives & Special Collections
Arkansas State University
Dean B. Ellis Library
P.O. Box 2040
State University, AR 72467
Phone Number: 870-972-2960
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Summary Information

Compiled By: Meredith McFadden; Flora Smith, Editor, December 1, 1998

Creator: Robert Whitlow

Date: 1945-1987

Physical Description: 0.4 linear feet. The collection contains 4 folders in 1 document box

Language: English

Abstract

During World War II, the POWs were housed at a camp established at the Jonesboro Civilian Conservation Corps, where they first met Whitlow. This collection contains correspondence between former-German POWs and Robert Whitlow, a representative of the Memphis Scimitar Press.

Acquisition

This collection was donated by Larry Bell in 1998. Further additions to this collection are not expected.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Meredith McFadden, Jennifer Hardin, and Flora Smith.

Conditions Governing Access

This manuscript collection consists of physical materials. This collection has not been digitized. This collection is open for research use only in the Reading Room. It is not available for request through Interlibrary Loan. Please contact the archive via email (archives@astate.edu) at least a week in advance of your arrival to ensure the availability of the material.

Rights Statement

Copyright has not been transferred to the archive. Standard copyright laws (U. S. Title 17) apply.

Preferred Citation

Robert Whitlow Papers, Item Name and Date, Box and Folder Numbers, Archives and Special Collections, Dean B. Ellis Library, Arkansas State University.

Historical Note

After successful military campaigns by the U.S. Army in Northern Africa during 1943, several hundred thousand prisoners of war flooded into the United States. Prisoner of War camps were established throughout the country in order to house the captured "Afrika Korps" soldiers. In Arkansas several camps received POWs, including the administrative headquarters for POW camps, Camp Robinson. However, these large concentrations of prisoners were problematic. They did not facilitate the employment of POWs in jobs compliant with the Geneva Convention.

In response to the dilemma, 30 branch camps were established to better distribute the POW population. The majority of branch camps were established in Eastern Arkansas where there was a severe shortage

of farm labor. Jonesboro was selected as one of the sites for a branch camp and the prisoners were relocated to a site near Arkansas State College to provide farm and general labor for the surrounding community.

Robert Whitlow was a Jonesboro resident and reporter for the Memphis Press-Scimitar newspaper. He visited the POW camp at Arkansas State College in order to write reports regarding the prisoners of war. Among the German POWs Whitlow met in Jonesboro were Ernst Lorenz and Karl Heinz-Hermanns. Both men were from the Afrika Korps and they spent their internment picking cotton, working rice fields, and providing other labor in the Jonesboro area.

Karl Heinz-Hermanns was repatriated to Germany during 1946. Due to severe economic conditions, he immigrated to Sweden in the 1950s. Hermanns kept in touch with several fellow former POWs from Jonesboro as well as with Robert Whitlow. They exchanged gifts in the first three years after Hermanns' repatriation, including rice, a food not available in Germany at the time. Hermanns and Whitlow maintained correspondence until 1987.

Ernst Lorenz also repatriated to Germany in 1946 then later immigrated to Sweden. Through Hermanns, he regained contact with Whitlow. In 1977, Lorenz traveled back to America to visit his brother in New York and the Whitlow family in Jonesboro. He returned to America in 1982 and 1986 for additional visits. Lorenz and Whitlow exchanged correspondence until 1986.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains photocopies of correspondence between two former-German POWs and Robert Whitlow, a representative of the *Memphis Scimitar Press*.

Related Materials

Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following resource in Archives & Special Collections holding:

- Second World War Prisoners of War Collection: This collection highlights the efforts made to the establishment and retention of prisoner of war camps in Arkansas during the Second World War.
- Archives & Special Collections houses "POWs in Arkansas," a short documentary by Mike Bowman. This documentary can be accessed on VHS, DVD and digital and is non-circulating.

Other materials in Archives & Special Collections holdings may relate to this topic. Please contact Archives & Special Collections at archives@astate.edu for further research assistance.

Researchers may also be interested contacting and visiting the following archives:

- University of Arkansas Archives & Special Collections: The University of Arkansas houses some collections pertaining to prisoners of war housed in Arkansas. These collections include "World War II Prisoner of War Records" and "German POW Letters."
- Arkansas State Archives: The Arkansas State Archives may house items related to prisoners of war and Japanese internment camps.

Subjects

- Correspondence
- Prisoners of War
- Prisoners of war--Germany
- Prisoners of war--United States
- Prisoner-of-war camps
- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945--Prisoners and prisons
- World War, 1939-1945--Prisoners and prisons, German

Names

- Arkansas State College
- German. Heer. Panzerameekorps Afrika
- Memphis Press Scimitar
- Jonesboro (Ark.)
- Hermanns, Karl-Heinz
- Lorenz, Ernst
- Whitlow, Robert

Collection Inventory

Box 1:

Folder Number	Folder Name	Dates
1	Lorenz Visit News Clipping	1977, 1986
2	Ernst Lorenz Correspondence	1947-1986
3	Karl-Heinz Hermanns Correspondence	1945-1948
4	Karl-Heinz Hermanns Correspondence	1963-1987