

George Melcher Company K Photograph Album, 1916

Repository: Hingham Public Library
Manuscript Number: MSC #28
Creator: George Melcher
Quantity: 1 Nonstandard Flat Box (1 Photograph Album)
Processed By: Stephanie McBain and Jennifer Williams. Finding aid completed in April of 2015.
Access: Open for research. Some materials have been placed in protective enclosures and should not be removed from them.

Provenance

This album was created by George Melcher in 1916 and was donated to the Hingham Public Library by Elizabeth M. Anderson at an unknown date.

Biographical Note

George Melcher was born in Hingham, Mass. on December 22, 1879 to Charles C. and Abby Ripley (Whiton) Melcher. George and his younger brother William grew up in Hingham where they attended the local public schools. In 1903 George joined Company K of the 5th Infantry Regiment Massachusetts National Guard and was called to active service eight times during the next thirteen years.

In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson sent military forces to the United States-Mexican border in response to the Mexican Revolution. Guerilla warfare, led by Francisco (Pancho) Villa, had resulted in several incursions into the United States. Between 1916 and 1919 various National Guard regiments from across the country served at the border for periods of 90 days or more. Their goal was to reinforce army garrisons between Texas and California as well as to secure the region's infrastructure. Between June and November of 1916 – the height of the border conflict – Lt. George Melcher was stationed in El Paso, Texas.

In 1917 George married Charlotte Edwards of Cohasset. The couple moved to Boston where George worked as a cashier and later as a clerk in the Boston branch of the Nashua Manufacturing Company. In the 1940s they moved to Nashua, New Hampshire where George had received a position as the secretary of the company's treasurer, Robert Amory. While there he became a charter member of "Whipple Academy," the name given to a group of men working at the company who came together for social events.

Charlotte died on March 6, 1945 and two years later George married Laura Lucas Hoyle. By this time he had retired and was spending most of his time on personal hobbies. George was extremely interested in the subject of history and became an active board member of the Nashua Historical Society. He was considered a great authority on the city's history and often wrote stories about it for the local newspaper. He was also a very religious man, serving as ~~the~~ President of the Nashua Federation of Churches as well as ~~the~~ President of the New Hampshire Unitarian Association Conference.

George was a popular man in Nashua, taking daily strolls into town in order to talk to his friends and visit local stores. He was very proud of his membership in the Massachusetts National Guard and would often speak of his service to others in the community. He was also a member of the Old Colony Lodge for more than fifty years. George died on August 25, 1969, two years after the passing of his second wife. He bequeathed all of his real estate to the Nashua Historical Society.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of one photograph album, created by George Melcher, which contains photographs relating to Company K of the 5th Infantry Regiment Massachusetts National Guard while they were stationed at the Mexican border in 1916. Photographs depict army life as well as the landscapes and people of Mexico and southwestern United States.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into the following series:

- Series I. George Melcher Company K Photograph Album, 1916

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Box 1

This series contains an album of photographs taken in 1916 by George Melcher when he was stationed with Company K of the 5th Infantry Regiment Massachusetts National Guard at the United States-Mexican border. The photographs were taken in Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico. They depict various aspects of life in the army barracks and camps, with subjects including inspections, drills, religious services, and travel by wagon. There are also images of the landscape, towns, and people of the area around El Paso, Texas. Most images include a handwritten caption. Some photographs have come loose from the pages and therefore have been placed in protective enclosures within the album.