World War I Sources in the Migration and Social Services Collections

The Migration and Social Service Collections (MSSC) document “The Great War” from many perspectives. Records in MSSC chronicle the wartime experiences of soldiers and civilians, detail services for soldiers in war zones and illuminate home front, medical, social and recreational activities. The collections also relate to post-war issues such as refugees, displaced persons and returning veterans.

The following represents a sample of available source material and is not intended to be comprehensive. All research sources presented here are available for public research, by appointment, in the Elmer L. Andersen Library Reading Room. To make an appointment, or for more information, please visit the Migration and Social Services Collections website. To contact individual units, refer to the link listed after each collection description.

Archival Sources

Sidney Cohen papers, 1917-1925. Digitized. This collection consists of four log books detailing Cohen's time spent in the Hospital Corp of the United States Navy during World War I. umja0028.

Emma Young Dickson, 1917-1955 (bulk 1918-1919). Digitized. The collection includes diaries, correspondence, photographs and memorabilia, dating from the period Dickson served with the American Expeditionary Forces as a YMCA canteen worker in France. The diaries are organized like a scrapbook with letters, telegrams and memorabilia pasted alongside the daily entries. Y.USA.8.

Frank and Arthur Eisenberg papers, 1863-1948. Digitized. The collection consists of correspondence and ephemera from father and son Frank and Arthur Eisenberg, members of a Jewish family living in Minneapolis, who both served in the military during World War I and World War II respectively. umja0007.

Lantern slide collection, 1910-1930. Partially digitized. Lantern slides document YMCA international work, including work with the armed services during World War I. Of particular note are hand-painted slides made by German prisoners of war during World War I. Y.USA.47.

Kenneth Dexter Miller papers, 1910-1969. The papers include correspondence, memorabilia, professional writings and scrapbooks. Diaries and photographs document Miller’s travels across Siberia with the Czechoslovak Legion from 1917-1919. IHRC1553.

Updated October 2016.
Minneapolis Red Cross records, 1915-2003. The records document services for soldiers and home front programs. A collection of photographs and postcards, dating to both during and after the war, depict local residents and scenery, relief activities and Red Cross staff from the American National Red Cross Commission to Albania and the American National Red Cross Italian and Serbian Commission. sw0273.

Stella Mickritz Mucha papers, 1919-1983. Papers consist of correspondence, photographs, school records, newspaper clippings, reports and published materials. Scrapbooks document Mickritz’s career as a nurse, including her service with the Polish Grey Samaritans, a nursing unit assembled under the auspices of the YWCA and the American Relief Administration’s European Children’s Fund. IHRC1538.

National Recreation Association records, 1906-1972. With the start of World War I, the organization expanded to provide services to troops at training camps. Due to the poor physical fitness of prospective recruits, fitness became a large concern in America. Records contain minutes, reports and other documents from War Camp Community Service, which was created to raise funds and boost morale. sw00074.

Stefan Osusky papers, 1914-1937. Papers contain personal and professional papers and writings. Topics include the movement for Czech independence, negotiations by President Woodrow Wilson with Emperor Charles of Austria, relations between the Czech National Committee and the French government, Hungarian involvement in World War I and the economic situation in Austria-Hungary prior to World War I. During the inter-war years, Osusky served as both a diplomat and an ambassador. IHRC2000.

Jack Pink papers, 1918-1959. Partially digitized. This collection includes Pink’s journal, which he kept during his time in the United States Army in 1918. umja0030.

Survey Associates records, 1891-1952 and Paul U. Kellogg papers, 1891-1952. The records of this progressive journal and the personal papers of its editor document World War I and the pacifist movement through correspondence from important figures in the progressive movement, social work, philanthropy, government and social service agencies. sw0001 and sw0084.

Rose G. Szewc papers, 1916-1929. Papers consist of correspondence, newspaper clippings and miscellany. Szewc’s activities included work with civilian relief organizations in Poland during WWI and teaching English to foreign-born recruits at Ft. Benjamin Harrison in Indiana. She also served as the Executive Secretary of the American Association for the Education of Foreign-Born Soldiers in the United States. IHRC2574.

United States Veterans Administration Social Work Service records, 1921-1963. The collection reflects the efforts of the VA Social Work Service to develop a program of social and to assist in readjustment problems of veterans returning to community life. sw0002.

World War I related records, 1910-1970 (bulk 1917-1921). The collection documents the records of major YMCA administrative bodies which provided services to the military forces in the United States and abroad during World War I. Files include minutes, correspondence, publicity bulletins, training manuals, reports and newspapers. Y.USA.4-1.

Books & Journals


Playground Association of America. The Playground, 1907-1929. GV421 .P73x


Viestnik' Obshchestva Russkikh' Veteranov' Veliko Vony (Messenger of the Russian Veterans of World War I), 1926-1965 (frequency varies). IHRCA

Photographs & Media

Click here to view a selection of digitized images from the Migration and Social Services Collections related to the First World War, including photographs, posters, documents, newspapers and more.

Leaving for War, 1917. Lydia Hanson papers. IHRC3381.