

Charles A. Kline Papers

MS – 342

Wright State University  
Department of Special Collections and Archives

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## Introduction

The Charles A. Kline Papers were accessioned into the Wright State University Department of Special Collections and Archives in September 2004. The papers were donated by Don Wallace, a “shirt-tail” cousin of the Klins.

The collection dates from Oct. 4, 1917 through Apr. 2, 1922. It consists of 8 file folders which fit into 1/2 Hollinger box. Also included is a CD which contains scans of the Charles A. Kline Papers. This collection is arranged into two series as follows:

Series 1: Correspondence

Series 2: Envelopes

There are no restrictions on the use of the materials in this collection.

## Biographical Sketch

Charles A. Kline was born in Medway, Ohio in the year of 1891(?). His parents are referred to as Mr. And Mrs. Henry H. Kline in his letters. Charles A. Kline enlisted in the National Army of Springfield, Ohio on Sept. 20, 1917 and served as part of Battery D, 324<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. Later he was discharged and became a Private, 1<sup>st</sup> class on August 4, 1918. Charles was also part of the American Expeditionary Forces between June 12, 1918 and May 22, 1919. He was honorably discharged on June 5, 1919.

During the first year of his service, Charles A. Kline was stationed at Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, Ohio. Camp Sherman was built in July 1917 and created an economy boost for Chillicothe, as soldiers and their families began to move into the area. Camp Sherman was planned to be a military training camp for soldiers coming from Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio. Later, it became the third largest training center in the United States at that time. Charles often said that they received good meals in the camp and that there was some entertainment to keep the boys busy. He also refers to Chillicothe as being a large town but that it did not have very many large stores. There are occasions in which he says that army life is not the life in which he enjoys but that he would bare through it.

In June 1918, Charles A. Kline's regiment was stationed at Camp Mills, Long Island, New York. He said in one letter that Camp Mills was nothing compared to Camp Sherman and that they will probably never see a camp like that again. The main reason for the move over to New York was for the soldiers to get ready to be sent to France. Around mid-June, Charles had been sent to an undisclosed location in France where the army began to censor his letters, so he was unable to write much detail as to where he was or what the army was doing. He wrote of the French people as being strange to him, but they were also very welcoming and friendly. Charles had little time to write his family and friends during the time when he was overseas, mainly because the troops were always on the move and they also had very little supply of paper.

Charles A. Kline took part in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive on September 26, 1918, when Marshal Ferdinand Foch decided to order an attack at Meuse-Argonne in an attempt to cut-off the entire German Second Army. The American Expeditionary Forces were given the main attacking role, while there were also many tanks and airplanes helping in the attack. The German Army held on until November 4, 1918, when they began to retreat. Fresh U.S. troops were moved to the front and had advanced a good distance when the Armistice was announced.

In the late part of November 1918, Charles wrote a letter which indicated he was in the Northeastern part of Luxemburg. The censorship of the soldiers' letters had been lifted so Charles was able to write his family about all of his travels throughout France. In December 1918, Charles indicates that he and the other troops had moved into the Southern part of Germany and were living quite nicely in abandoned towns and homes, and sometimes they stayed with the townspeople. When the Armistice was signed, it was agreed that there would be a Peace Conference held in Paris to discuss the post-war world, which started on January 12, 1919. As of April 2, 1919, Charles A. Kline was still in Kausen, Germany because peace had not yet been signed between the countries. The Treaty of Versailles was later signed on June 28, 1919. It is not indicated when Kline returned home in these letters.

## Scope and Content

The Charles A. Kline Papers are a source of information for research relating to WWI, soldier life, and Camp Sherman located in Chillicothe, Ohio. Also, this information could be used for genealogical purposes for descendants of the Kline Family.

Series 1, Correspondence, contains many letters to and from Charles A. Kline. This series contains the bulk of the collection, taking up seven of the eight file folders. Many of the letters are written from Kline to his family and friends. The span dates for this series are Oct. 4, 1917 through Apr. 2, 1919.

Series 2, Envelopes, contains miscellaneous envelopes from letters written to and from Charles A. Kline. There is only one file folder which contains these envelopes. The span dates for this series are Oct. 4, 1917 through Apr. 5, 1922.

## Container Listing

### **Series I: Correspondence**

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Correspondence	Oct. 4, 1917-Oct. 31, 1917
	2	Correspondence	Nov. 3, 1917-Dec. 30, 1917
	3	Correspondence	Jan. 11, 1918-Mar. 23, 1918
	4	Correspondence	Mar. 28, 1918-May 1, 1918
	5	Correspondence	May 11, 1918-July 1, 1918
	6	Correspondence	Aug. 13, 1918-Oct. 29, 1918
	7	Correspondence	Nov. 4, 1918-Apr. 2, 1919

### **Series II: Envelopes**

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	8	Envelopes	Oct. 4, 1917-Apr. 5, 1922