

Collection #
M 0801

JAMES AND MILDRED GAUKER CORRESPONDENCE, 1943–1945

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	3 boxes, 1 folder of photographs
COLLECTION DATES:	January 1943–September 1945
PROVENANCE:	Charles Apfelbaum Rare Manuscripts, Watchung, New Jersey, 11 August 1999, 1 November 1999, 7 January 2000
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1999.0558, 2000.0080, 2000.0292

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James W. Gauker (1912–94) was born in Henry County, Indiana, but later moved to Cambridge City, Wayne County, Indiana. He joined the Army in 1943 and served in the Air Corps trained in radio and gunnery, attaining the rank of staff sergeant and flying missions on a B 25 Mitchell bomber with the 10th Air Force in India.

He was married to Mildred Mary Howard (1916–98) who worked for the McClelland Casket Hardware Company in Richmond, Indiana. James Gauker died in Cambridge City in 1994.

Sources:

Ancestry Plus (<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/indi66221>). Accessed 17 July 2003.

National Archives Data Bases, World War II Army Enlistment Records. Accessed 15 May 2006.

[http://aad.archives.gov/aad/display-partial-records.jsp?](http://aad.archives.gov/aad/display-partial-records.jsp?f=3475&mtch=1&q=Gauker%2C+James+W.&cat=GP23&dt=893&tf=F&bc=sl,sd)

[f=3475&mtch=1&q=Gauker%2C+James+W.&cat=GP23&dt=893&tf=F&bc=sl,sd](http://aad.archives.gov/aad/display-partial-records.jsp?f=3475&mtch=1&q=Gauker%2C+James+W.&cat=GP23&dt=893&tf=F&bc=sl,sd)

Information in collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection primarily consists of letters written between Staff Sergeant James W. Gauker while serving in the Army Air Corps and his wife, Mildred, in Cambridge City, Wayne County, Indiana, and working for the McClelland Casket Hardware Company in Richmond, Indiana, January, 1943–September, 1945. Locations include the Army Air Forces Technical School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota (May 1943 and August 1943–January 1944); Air Corps Technical School, Keeler Field, Mississippi (June–July 1943); and the Flexible Gunnery School, Ft. Myers, Florida (January–April 1944). Later stations include Savannah, Georgia and Greenville, South Carolina (May–August 1944). From September 1944 until August 1945 letters were sent as a member of the 81st Squadron, 12th Bomb Group of the 10th Air Force in India and from Santa Ana, California, August–September 1945. These contain several sections removed by the censors but the overall content centers around daily camp life and friends and missing home.

The early letters contain an extensive description of Gauker's training activities. He complains of the heat and the degree of hate he is being taught. Gauker encourages his wife to write often, but not to stay at home as long as she tells him where she goes. He also discusses the lives and personal affairs of other friends who write to him. Letters written in early July discuss his time in the base hospital with pneumonia and other medical problems. A recurring subject in Gauker's letters beginning in mid-June is his worrying about and questioning of his wife's faithfulness. The overall tone is initially one of loneliness and despondency but is later more a sense of acceptance and a desire to do well. There are some references to the missions he flew as a radio operator and gunner in a B-25 Mitchell.

Other correspondents include Bryan and John Gauker with the Navy in Great Lakes, Illinois and Florida and Woody Conner with the Army Air Forces in Wisconsin and other stations.

There also are several love letters to Sergeant James Mulligan with the U. S. Army in Europe from Vivian Mendenhall, also working for McClelland Casket Hardware in Richmond, May–July 1945

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0801).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.