

Collection #  
M 1108  
OM 0563

## CHARLES SNYDER ERNSBERGER MATERIALS, 1908–2003

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Processed by

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 1 manuscript box, 1 half manuscript box, 1 half graphics box, 3 photograph folders, 1 OVB graphics box, 2 OVB graphics folders, 1 OM folder, 1 OVC graphics box, 3 OVC graphics folders, 1 OVC photograph box, 2 OVC photograph folders, 3 Cirkut panoramic photographs, 13 artifacts

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1908–2003

**PROVENANCE:** Greg K. Lawson, Edwardsburg, Michigan

**RESTRICTIONS:** None

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 2006.0009

**NOTES:**

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Charles Edward Snyder (sometimes spelled “Snider”) was born February 1, 1899, probably in Indiana. In May 1917, he joined the Indiana National Guard as a private in Company E, Third Indiana Infantry. His enlistment record lists his profession as “solderer.” In August of 1917, while still a minor, Snyder was legally adopted by Charles A. and Viola Ernsberger of Elkhart, and legally changed his last name to Ernsberger. Ernsberger seems to have been a devoted son, having later written and published a sentimental poem in honor of his mother while serving in the Army. Also in August 1917, the Third Infantry was mobilized as Battery E, 137<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery in the United States Army. He trained at Camp Shelby in Mississippi, and shipped out to Liverpool in October 1918. As part of Battery E, he served in England and France. Ernsberger traveled home aboard the U.S.S. *George Washington*, and was honorably discharged from the Army December 23, 1918. On his service record, his commanding officer described PFC Ernsberger’s character as “Excellent.”

Ernsberger married Lelah J.V. Cripe in 1920, and had one son, Francis “Charlie” Ernsberger, born in 1929. Charles and Lelah were both active in the local VFW and the Elkhart Disabled American Veterans organization, and may have attended Bethel United Methodist Church. Though Ernsberger’s death certificate lists his occupation as “truck driver” for the Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company, several pamphlets in the collection indicate that he may have worked as a retail clerk at some point in time. Charles Ernsberger died of complications from Alzheimer’s Disease April 1, 1982 in Elkhart.

Sources:

Collection Materials

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection comprises six series. The first includes personal documents: military service records, civilian legal records, family news clippings, correspondence, and a short unpublished story about Charles Ernsberger written by collection donor Greg Lawson. The second series is made up of family portraits, both photographic and drawn. All photographic portraits in this series are of Ernsberger around the time of his service in the First World War, but there are also two drawings of particularly good quality, depicting three unidentified family members.

Military-related printed materials, imagery, and artifacts make up the third, fourth, and fifth series. Printed materials include various pamphlets, song sheets, a 1911 *Mess Sergeant's Handbook*, a softcover volume detailing Elkhart's involvement in the war, and six December 1918 issues of *The Hatchet*, a daily newsletter published aboard the U.S.S. *George Washington*. Imagery includes postcards, several group portrait prints of Battery E, 137<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, an illustrated roster with individual portraits, and a commemorative roster that has a portrait of Ernsberger and a poem he wrote affixed to the lower corners. Of particular note are three Cirkut panoramas. The series of artifacts includes mostly personal dress and grooming items, but also incorporates items such as a small artillery flag and a gunpowder flask.

The sixth and seventh series hold civilian printed materials and imagery. Printed materials include a 1933 world atlas and assorted booklets and pamphlets, such as a 1911 *Home Cyclopedia of Health* and a Jehovah's Witnesses booklet explaining the group's beliefs about saluting the flag. Graphic materials in the sixth series are mostly postcards depicting various notable buildings in Indiana, but these are also accompanied by a decorative lithograph, a road map, and a poster of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The most useful items in the collection are almost certainly those relating to the U.S. Military and WWI. The military pamphlets, booklets, and newsletters hint at the conduct expected of enlisted men at the time, and the *Mess Sergeant's Handbook* provides a very thorough description of ration amounts and field kitchen setup. The panorama of Camp Shelby is of particular interest in that it illustrates in detail a training camp's overall setup, density, and accommodations. Those researching home remedies, historic Indiana architecture, or the Buck Lake Ranch amusement park may find the civilian materials relevant, and the collection as a whole will be of interest to those researching Ernsberger family history.

## **SERIES CONTENTS**

### **Series 1: Personal Documents**

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Personal Correspondence, 1917–19	Box 1, Folder 1
Enlistment and Discharge Records, 1917–30	Box 1, Folder 2
Miscellaneous Military Documents, 1917–80	Box 1, Folder 3
Civilian Legal Documents, 1917–82	Box 1, Folder 4
Military News Clippings, ca. 1917–96	Box 1, Folder 5
Military Correspondence, 1918–1980s	Box 1, Folder 6
Obituary News Clippings, 1996–2003	Box 1, Folder 7
Greg Lawson, “Elkhart and the World War—Private Charles E. Snyder (Ernsberger),” 1999	Box 1, Folder 8

### **Series 2: Family Portraits**

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Drawing of Unidentified Couple (Probably Charles Snyder Ernsberger’s Parents or Grandparents), not dated	OVB Graphics Box 1 of 1
Drawing of Unidentified Woman (Probably Viola or Lelah Ernsberger), not dated	OVC Graphics Box 1 of 1
Photographic Print on Textile of Charles Snyder Ernsberger	OVC Photographs Folder 2 of 2
“Charles E. S. Ernsberger, age 18,” 1917 or 1918	Photographs Folder 1 of 3
Charles Snyder Ernsberger, ca. 1917–19	Photographs Folder 2 of 3
Charles Snyder Ernsberger, ca. 1917–19	OVC Photographs Box 1 of 1

### **Series 3: Military Printed Matter**

#### CONTENTS

*Mess Sergeant's Handbook*, 1911, with Notes, 1918

"Thousands Cheer Departing Company E," *Elkhart Truth* 10 September 1917

Enlisted Men's Bible and Prayer League Pocket Calendar, 1917

Military Song Compilations, ca. 1917–18

Blank Army and Navy Service Record Book, 1918

Issues of *The Hatchet*, December 1918

*Pictorial History of Elkhart's Part in the War*, 1919

Military-Related Pamphlets, 1919–20

"McConnell's Success" (Quartermaster Corps Pamphlet), 1925

"OPA Is Our Battle Line," 1944

#### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 9

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Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

Box 1, Folder 12

Box 1, Folder 13

Box 1, Folder 14

Box 1, Folder 15

Box 1, Folder 16

Box 1, Folder 17

### **Series 4: Military Graphic Materials**

#### CONTENTS

Battery E, 137<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Group Portrait and Roster, 1917

Portrait Roster of Company E, Third Indiana Infantry, 1917

"Service Over There" Placards, 1917–18

Group Portrait and Roster, Battery E, 137<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, ca. 1917–18

Battery E, 137<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Commemorative Roster with Photo of and Poem by Ernsberger, ca. 1917–19

Military Postcards, ca. 1917–19

#### CONTAINER

OVC Graphics  
Folder 2 of 3

OVC Photographs  
Folder 1 of 2

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 1

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 2

OVC Graphics  
Folder 3 of 3

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 3



Travel Mirror in Canvas Case, circa 1918–19

Artifacts: 2006.0009

## **Series 6: Civilian Printed Matter**

### CONTENTS

“Some Test Questions on the Standard Dictionary of Facts,” not dated

“United States Government Savings System” Pamphlet, n.d.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing, 1909

Edward Everett Hale, The Man Without a Country, 1910

Home Cyclopedia of Health, 1911

“Constitution of the Retail Clerks International Protective Association,” 1915

The Retail Clerks International Advocate 24.3 (March 1917), 1917

“The Life of Mary Sothern,” ca. 1930s

“Back to Good Old 1905” (Smith-Alsop Paint Promotional Booklet), 1932

Century of Progress Atlas of the World, 1933

“Loyalty” (Jehovah’s Witnesses Booklet), 1935

“50 Eventful Years at the Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company,” ca. 1954

Dick Hyman, It’s Against the Law, 1971

Bicentennial Song and Quote Booklet, 1976

### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 18

Box 1, Folder 19

Box 1, Folder 20

Box 1, Folder 21

Box 2, Folder 1

Box 2, Folder 2

Box 2, Folder 3

Box 2, Folder 4

Box 2, Folder 5

Box 2, Folder 6

Box 2, Folder 7

Box 2, Folder 8

Box 2, Folder 9

Box 2, Folder 10



## Series 7: Civilian Graphic Materials

### CONTENTS

Cardboard Spool Animals, not dated

*Far From Home* Lithograph, not dated

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Poster, not dated

Indiana Road/Mileage Map with Plant Pesticide Chart  
on Reverse, not dated

Peru, Indiana Architectural Postcards, not dated

Animal Postcards, not dated

Indiana Postcards (mostly architectural), 1908–71

San Francisco Postcard, 1950

Buck Lake Ranch Postcards, ca. 1952–60

### CONTAINER

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 5

OVC Graphics  
Folder 1 of 3

OVB Graphics  
Folder 1 of 2

OVB Graphics  
Folder 2 of 2

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 6

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 7

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 8

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 9

Graphics  
Box 1, Folder 10

## 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 1108).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.