

Collection #
M 0890
OM 0442

CLAUDE WISE CORRESPONDENCE, 1917–1919

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	3 manuscript boxes; 1 oversize folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1917–1919
PROVENANCE:	Karl O. Staufenbeil, Indianapolis, Indiana, September 2006

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2006.0394

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Claude Wise (1893–1987) was born in Indianapolis, Indiana to Daniel Harman Wise (1847–1927) and Emma Harriet Lyons Wise (1862–1948). Wise had very little formal education and went to work for the railroad at the age of 8. From 1917–1919 he served in the United States Army as a private initially in the 334th Infantry and later in Company O of the 19th Engineers in France. After the war, Wise returned to the railroad and eventually supervised 125 people in the Big Four Railroad building. Ruth Wise taught school in Indianapolis during World War I but quit when Claude returned home. During World War II she was a substitute teacher in Indianapolis.

In 1917 Wise married Ruth Winslow (1896–1997). They had two sons: Winslow Austin Wise (1921–1976) and Robert William Wise (1925–1983)

Sources:

Information obtained from Tina of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 23 August 2006 and supplied from donor on Deed of Gift form.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of this 360 plus letter collection were written by Claude Wise to his wife, Ruth Winslow Wise, while serving in the United States Army during World War I, September 1917–1919. Wise writes from basic training with the 334th Infantry at Camp Zachary Taylor near Louisville, Kentucky, detailing his daily activities, his love for her, and his furloughs when they have the opportunity to meet, and awaiting orders to move out, September, 1917–April 1918. Wise's letters continue from Camp Merritt, Jersey City, New Jersey, April 1918–May 1918, and writes about visiting New York City, meeting soldiers from other states from both the regular army and national guard units, and waiting to be shipped overseas.

Wise writes one letter while on shipboard crossing the Atlantic and complains of seasickness (11 May 1918). His

letters from France (May 1918–April 1919) with the 19th Engineers (later 19th Transportation Corps) generally deal with the differences in language and culture and about a confidence that the war is near winning with the help of the Americans although he does mention that censorship limits what he can write about. He also writes that the English do not receive enough credit for their winning of the war. While Wise was not at the front, he does relate stories of those he knew who saw combat. He also writes about news from home he has received in Ruth's earlier letters and states on numerous occasions that he is remaining faithful to her while overseas. Most of the letters are from Nevers, France and his duties appear to be clerical in nature. After the armistice, Wise's unit moved to Tours, France, where he waited to be shipped home.

The collection also contains letters written to Claude Wise by others that he apparently sent home with those to his wife for information, 1917–1919. They include those from his parents, family, co-workers, and friends. Most were from the United States, but there are several from Harry Laber who also served in France in 1918 and was involved in the routing of trains for the military. There is also a page from Indianapolis *Star's War Magazine* in 1918 that features photos and information of Hoosiers in France that includes Claude Wise.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Correspondence, September 1917	Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, October 1917	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, November 1917	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, December 1917	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, January 1918	Box 1, Folder 5
Correspondence, February 1918	Box 1, Folder 6
Correspondence, March 1918	Box 2, Folder 1
Correspondence, April 1918	Box 2, Folder 2
Correspondence, May 1918	Box 2, Folder 3
Correspondence, June 1918	Box 2, Folder 4
Correspondence, July 1918	Box 2, Folder 5
<i>The Star's War Magazine</i> , 1918	OM 0442
Correspondence, August 1918	Box 2, Folder 6
Correspondence, September 1918	Box 2, Folder 7
Correspondence, October 1918	Box 2, Folder 8
Correspondence, November 1918	Box 2, Folder 9
Correspondence, December 1918	Box 2, Folder 10

Correspondence, January 1919	Box 3, Folder 1
Correspondence, February 1919	Box 3, Folder 2
Correspondence, March 1919	Box 3, Folder 3
Correspondence, April 1919	Box 3, Folder 4
Correspondence, May 1919	Box 3, Folder 5

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 0890).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.