

**The Filson Historical Society**

**Clara Gibson  
Papers, 1890, 1908-1919**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, see the Curator of Special Collections.

Size of Collection:  
0.66 Cubic Feet

Location Number:  
Mss./A/G448

**Clara Gibson  
Papers, 1890, 1908-1919**

**Scope and Content Note**

The Clara Gibson papers consist of records of interest retained by Clara Gibson. These records document the activities and social life of a young Louisville, Kentucky woman during high school and through World War I.

The Clara Gibson papers contain several items of incoming correspondence, primarily from soldiers serving in the United States Army during World War I. Gibson's primary correspondents were Sergeant A. C. "Cliff" Carbery and Corporal Richard B. "Dick" Harris, but there are also letters from Edison Eubank, Bob Luell, Charles E. Walker, Homer O. Stuart, Jimmy Wray, Charles Carlson, William F. Ricketts, and various individuals identified only by first name. Several of these men pursued romantic relationships with Gibson before enlisting or while serving in the military. The correspondence includes letters from Camp Sherman, Ohio, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and France. Postcards, some color, showing New York, Washington D.C., France, and romantic scenes of soldiers and civilian women are included in the correspondence from Carbery and Harris.

Gibson attended Louisville Girls High School, and her papers include report cards, lists of textbooks, commencement invitations, Louisville Railway tickets, her class schedules, supplementary reading lists, theater programs (including sheet music to "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines" for the play of the same name) for Macauley's Theatre, and the *High School Record* for December 1918 and January 1919. A small number of items related to productions put on by the Louisville Boy's School at Macauley's Theatre are also included.

Through her correspondence with soldiers and her own activities Gibson collected one folder of military related papers. These include furlough slips, booklets of patriotic songs, advertisements for war bonds, rules regarding mail and Christmas packages for soldiers, reprints of speeches by prominent politicians regarding World War I, volunteer and community service badges, a program to the 334<sup>th</sup> Regimental Minstrel Show, advice on gardening and saving coal, a blank furlough slip for Camp Zachary Taylor (with locations of Soldiers' Club and Club for Colored Soldiers on the opposite side), eight colored magazine illustrations of "A Day in the Life of a Soldier" originally painted by Sidney H. Riesenberg (source unknown), and Gibson's registration card for the Woman's Committee-Council of National Defense.

Two printed booklets in the collection include a souvenir copy of the song "My Old Kentucky Home" by Stephen C. Foster and a copy of *Sayings* by Luke McLuke. This last is a collection of short, humorous jokes and anecdotes.

***Scope and Content Note (continued)***

News clippings are chiefly composed of fashion columns and advice (particularly “My Style Diary,” a recurring column which Gibson pasted into a book), World War I, and local and high school theater.

Finally, a miscellaneous folder contains a 1918 French calendar with color illustrations of young women and fairies, fashion illustrations and advertisements (some color), a Butterick brand pattern for a kimono, an invitation to the 1918 Optimist’s Club Dinner addressed to Clara’s father, William C. Gibson, and a memorial to the 15 September 1889 death of five Louisville Fire Department fire fighters.

A small number of artifacts were separated to the museum.

Some photos were also separated.

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**Biographical Note**

Clara Gibson was born circa 1900 to William C. Gibson and Lizzie M. (possibly Lilly May) Gibson. She resided at 349 N. 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Louisville, Kentucky, and attended the Louisville Girls High School where she was active in theater. Gibson was a Red Cross volunteer during World War I, likely a nurse, at Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky. She corresponded with several soldiers in the United States Army, collected Macauley's Theatre ephemera, and died of Spanish influenza in late February or early March of 1919. She was preceded in death by two sisters, names unknown. Her brother, Anderson Alter Gibson, survived to adulthood.

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**Folder List**

Box 1

Folder 1: Personal Correspondence from A. C. "Cliff" Carbery, 1918-1919

Folder 2: Personal Correspondence from Richard B. Harris, 1918-1919

Folder 3: Personal Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1918-1919

Folder 4: Louisville Girls High School Papers, 1915-1919

Box 2

Folder 5: Military Papers, 1916-1918

Folder 6: Poetry and Humor Papers, 1890, 1916

Folder 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1913-1919

Folder 8: Miscellaneous, 1908-1919

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**Subject Headings**

Advertising  
Airplanes  
Art calendars  
Camp Sherman (Ohio)  
Camp Zachary Taylor (Ky.)  
Carbery, A. C.  
Clothing and dress – Kentucky – Louisville  
Commencement ceremonies – Kentucky – Louisville  
Courtship – Kentucky  
Dance parties  
Education – Kentucky  
Education, Secondary – Kentucky – Louisville  
Fairies  
Fashion – Kentucky – Louisville  
Fort Sill (Ok.)  
Foster, Stephen Collins, 1826-1864  
Harris, Richard B.  
High school girls – Kentucky – Louisville  
Humorous recitations  
Influenza Epidemic, 1918-1919 – Kentucky – Louisville  
Kentucky – Social life and customs  
Letterheads  
Louisville Girls High School, 1856-1950  
Love-letters – Kentucky – Louisville  
Macauley's Theatre (Louisville, Ky.)  
Machine guns  
Military education – Kentucky  
Military education – Ohio  
Military education – Oklahoma  
Military training camps – Kentucky – Louisville  
Military training camps – Ohio  
Military training camps – Oklahoma  
Patriotism – Kentucky – Louisville  
Postcards  
Prohibition  
Race relations  
Racism  
Railroad accidents – France

***Subject Headings (Continued)***

Segregation – Kentucky – Louisville

Songs

Speeches, addresses, etc.

State songs – Kentucky

Theater – Kentucky – Louisville

Theater programs – Kentucky – Louisville

Transportation – Tickets – Kentucky – Louisville

United States. Army. American Expeditionary Forces

United States. Army. Infantry Regiment 333rd.

United States. Army. Machine Gun Battalion, 327th. Company C

United States. Army – Barracks and quarters

United States. Army – Machine gun drill and tactics

United States. Army – Military life

Volunteers – Kentucky – Louisville

Weather

Wit and humor

Women – Education – Kentucky – Louisville

Women volunteers – Kentucky – Louisville

World War, 1914-1918

World War, 1914-1918 – War work – Kentucky – Louisville – Red Cross

World War, 1914-1918 – Social aspects – United States

World War, 1914-1918 – Songs and music