

## Ernest Woodcock Collection

The Ernest Woodcock Collection is an open, processed collection containing photographs, letters, newspaper clippings and ephemera pertaining to the World War I military service of Ernest E. Woodcock of Topeka, Kansas. The collection is contained in one 10<sup>1/2</sup>" x 5" box. There are 5 folders of papers; one envelope containing programs, funeral cards, small photos, a medal and a lock of hair; and 20 5 x 7 and larger photographs. The material was received in several different folders and envelopes and was reorganized by the archives staff into a loose subject arrangement.

The provenance of the material is unknown, although Ernest's sister Alice wrote one of the biographical notes found in the collection.

### Collection Description

The material in this collection all pertains to the World War I service of Ernest E. Woodcock of Topeka, Kansas. According to a biographical note found in the material, Ernest enlisted in the Army in December 1917. Prior to enlisting, he worked for a Motor Car company in Topeka. After spending 4 months in the hospital with pneumonia, he was sent to Fort Worth Texas, and then to Wilbur Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio. He was assigned duty as an airplane mechanic in the 259<sup>th</sup> squadron. After training at Wright Field, he was sent to Hazelhurst Field, New York. From there he left for England and arrived there in early August 1918. Shortly after his arrival in England, he contracted pneumonia and died at the York Engineer Military Hospital on August 19<sup>th</sup>. He was first buried in Fulham cemetery in York, England, but in 1923 was reinterred along with other American soldiers in the Brookwood Cemetery in Brookwood, Surrey, England.

The collections contains a few personal letters written by Ernest to his sisters, Daisy and Alice, but most of the letters concern the circumstances of his death, the details of his funeral and the decision by the family to have his body moved from Fulham to the American Cemetery in Brookwood. There are a few photographs of Ernest, one as a child, two before his enlistment and three of him in uniform. Most of the pictures are of the funeral service and his grave. An American Red Cross visitor, Miss Caroline Derby, who cared for Ernest in the hospital until his death, sent these photographs to the family. Miss Derby also sent the family, letters detailing his death and funeral, the cards from the various funeral bouquets, and a lock of Ernest's hair. All of this material is part of the collection. There is also a Kansas service medal and the program for a service of Thanksgiving for the Topeka veterans, done in 1919.

### Box Listing:

**Folder #1:** Biographical notes (written by a sister?) and original envelopes

**Folder #2:** Letters by Ernest, letter to Ernest from a sister and two small photographs.

**Folder #3:** Letters to the family by Miss Derby and various Red Cross officials, also a letter from a Mrs. Merchant, who attended the funeral.

**Folder #4:** Official correspondence from the army pertaining to the return of effects, the removal of the body to Brookwood and other topics.

**Folder #5:** Newspaper clippings from Topeka newspapers.

**1 envelope** containing bouquet cards, medal, lock of hair, Christmas dinner menu, program of Topeka thanksgiving service, photograph of Ernest as a child and other paper ephemera.

**Photographs:**

2 photographs of Ernest before the war

1 photograph of Ernest in uniform

1 photograph of Miss Derby

16 photographs of the funeral service. (some are duplicates of the original photos)