



Monnig-Wilhelm-Valentine Family Papers (S0850)

Collection Number: S0850

Collection Title: Monnig-Wilhelm-Valentine Family Papers

Dates: 1871-1986

Creator: Monnig and Wilhelm-Valentine families

Abstract: The Monnig-Wilhelm-Valentine Family Papers contain diaries primarily written by Charles Louis Wilhelm (1878-1949), a St. Louis City-area signal maintenance man and amateur archeologist. In the diaries, Wilhelm discusses local and national events, such as World War II, and his interests in archaeology and Missouri history. Also included in the collection are correspondence and diaries belonging to his stepson, Raymond Bernard Valentine (1910-1991).

Collection Size: 4 cubic feet
(58 folders, 13 volumes, 66 photographs)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given, assigned, and transferred to the Society all copyrights, and associated rights the Donor may possess in the materials.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Monnig-Wilhelm-Valentine Family Papers* (S0850); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Helga Larsen and Jeannine Lessman on September 1, 2026 (Accession No. SA4894).

Processed by: Processed by Reilly McDonald, September 8, 2026

Notes:

This collection contains diaries with racially insensitive wording and images. SHSMO archivists have retained these texts and images to preserve their historical context. For example, folder 44 of the Charles L. Wilhelm diaries contain images of white performers in Blackface. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Blackface was a popular subgenre of American theater, where white actors wore black makeup to portray caricatures of Black Americans. Blackface became increasingly socially unacceptable in the 1930s and 1940s; the practice is now associated with racial bigotry and intolerance.

Historical Note:

Charles Louis Wilhelm (1878-1949) was born to Jacob and Cecelia Wilhelm on April 3, 1878. Growing up by the Missouri River in St. Ferdinand Township, St. Louis County, Missouri, Charles developed a strong appreciation of the natural world, particularly plants and bird species native to the Mississippi Valley. Another interest of Charles' was pre-Columbian civilizations, such as the Mississippian peoples who constructed the Cahokia Mounds.

On April 22, 1908, Charles married Henrietta W. Degenhardt (1884-1915). Together, they had one daughter, Gertrud C. Wilhelm (1910-1971). The couple lived together in St. Louis, Missouri until 1915 when Henrietta died unexpectedly at age 30. Although the death of his wife devastated Charles, he remarried in 1918 to Elizabeth M. Valentine (1877-1964), a widow herself and Henrietta's older sister. Elizabeth had four children from her previous marriage: Henrietta J. Valentine (1905-1994), Anton J. "Buzzy" Valentine (1906-1989), William T. Valentine (1908-1962), and Raymond B. Valentine (1910-1991).

Charles' official occupation was a repairman with the signal department of the St. Louis Terminal Railroad Association; however, he devoted much of his life to pursuing his personal interests of archaeology, botany, and historical research. These activities, as well as his personal thoughts and experiences were recorded in a series of diaries spanning from 1922 to 1948. This habit was passed on to his step-son, Raymond B. Valentine, who kept his own collection of diaries from 1925 to 1934.

Raymond B. Valentine worked as an architect and carpenter in St. Louis, Missouri. On September 2, 1939, he married Elizabeth T. Monnig (1912-2002), the daughter of Walter R. Monnig (1879-1925) and Elizabeth M. Koebbe (1871-1951). The Monnig family immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1844, settling in Hermann, Missouri. Walter R. Monnig, Elizabeth's father, moved to St. Louis to enter the real estate business, although the Monnigs had several businesses including carpentry and fur. Raymond and Elizabeth settled in Affton, Missouri and had two children: Elizabeth E. Valentine (1941-) and Raymond J. Valentine (1942-1972).

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 3 series with 3 subseries:

Monnig Family

Elizabeth T. Monnig

Genealogy

Wilhelm-Valentine Family

Raymond B. Valentine
Charles L. Wilhelm
Books and Periodicals

Scope and Content Note:

Monnig Family

This series consists of materials relating to the Monnigs, a family of German-American immigrants who arrived in the United States from Prussia in the 1840's. Included are ledgers and receipts from businesses operated by the Monnigs such as Walter R. Monnig's insurance and real estate company and Monnig Fur Company. This series includes two subseries: Elizabeth T. Monnig and Genealogy. Materials in this series date from 1926 to 1986 and are arranged alphabetically.

The Elizabeth T. Monnig subseries contains the personal papers of Elizabeth T. Monnig, a St. Louis school teacher and daughter of Walter R. Monnig. Included is correspondence between her and prospective employers, as well as her husband, Raymond B. Valentine. Notably, the subseries also contains a copy of Fontbonne College's 1934 yearbook, of which Elizabeth was an alumnus. Materials in this subseries date from 1934 to 1944 and are arranged alphabetically.

The Genealogy subseries contains correspondence, volumes, and family trees which provide a comprehensive history of the Monnig Family, tracking their movements from 18th century Prussia to the United States in the 1940's. Included are images of many family members including Walter R. Monnig. Materials in this series date from 1946 to 1980 and are arranged alphabetically.

Wilhelm - Valentine Family

This series consists of materials related to the Wilhelm-Valentine Family. The series is divided into two subseries: Raymond B. Valentine and Charles L. Wilhelm. Materials in this series date from 1910 to 1950 and are arranged alphabetically.

The Raymond B. Valentine subseries contains correspondence, postcards, event programs, and diaries related to Raymond B. Valentine. Also included is Raymond's baby book, which contains photographs and contextual history of the Wilhelm-Valentine family. Notably, the subseries contains Raymond's diaries from 1925 to 1934, in which he records significant events in his life as well as relationships and daily activities. Materials in this subseries date from 1910 to 1948 and are arranged alphabetically.

The Charles L. Wilhelm subseries primarily contains diaries written by Charles L. Wilhelm, as well as newsletters of the Missouri Archaeological Society from 1923 to 1950. The earlier diaries primarily record Charles' interests and personal life, featuring detailed drawings of flora and fauna native to Missouri, as well as archaeological sketches and surveys of the Mississippi River Valley such as Cahokia and Bonhomme Mounds. Also included is poetry written by Charles, inspired by events such as the death of his first wife Henrietta, and his appreciation of the natural world.

In addition to his personal life, the latter diaries feature newspaper clippings, biographical sketches, and photographs relating to current events. Topics include the Great Depression, World

War II, and 20th century transportation. Charles also recorded statistics such as local and national crime, tax, and government spending. All diaries include daily logs of weather patterns, as well as flooding and heatwaves. Materials in this subseries date from 1922 to 1950 and are arranged alphabetically.

Books and Periodicals

This series consists of books and periodicals collected by the Monnig and Wilhelm-Valentine families. Topics include the economic and industrial landscape of St. Louis in the 19th and 20th centuries, St. Louis parks and recreation, and the development of Missouri highways. Notably the series contains a souvenir booklet from the 1926 Greater St. Louis Independence Celebration and Exposition of Industrial Progress. Materials in this series date from 1871 to 1939 and are arranged alphabetically.

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	f.3	Personal papers, 1930-1944
	v. 2-3, f. 4	Genealogy
	v.2	<i>A Monnig Family History: The Descendants of Bernard Joseph Monnig and Katharina Henriette Stuckman</i> , 1980
	v.3	<i>The Monnig Family: A Story of Germany and America</i> , 1957
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Wilhelm-Valentine Family

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Box 003	f. 30-46	Diaries, 1922-1943
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Books and Periodicals

v.4	<i>The Challenge of St. Louis</i> , 1917
v.5	<i>A City Plan for St. Louis</i> , 1907
v.6	<i>City of St. Louis Report of the Park Commissioner</i> , 1900-1901
v.7	<i>Ford's Home Almanac and Facts Book</i> , 1939

- v.8 *Greater St. Louis Exposition*, souvenir booklet, 1926
- v.9 *Life of Most Reverend Peter Richard Kenrick, D.D., Archbishop of St. Louis*, 1891
- v. 10 *The Mayor's Inaugural Address and Message with Accompanying Documents to the City Council of the City of Saint Louis at its May Session*, 1871
- v. 11 *Mercantile Industrial and Professional St. Louis*, 1902
- v. 12 *Public School Messenger*, volume 28, no. 17, 1931
- v. 13 *Third Biennial Report of the State Highway Commission of Missouri*, 1922

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