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Love and War: A Serendipitous Sweetheart Story

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Abstract

Let me just say that I love that its my job to read and process the recorded memories of alumni during World War II. It is just so amazing to me that I can take part in the eternal preservation of these pieces of history! As I mentioned in my last post, I am in the midst of processing a collection of letters, papers and photographs compiled by the senior editor of the Gettysburg Magazine, Jerold Wikoff. Last week, I spent the majority of my time simply reading through and getting to know the stories of various Gettysburg alums that lived through the Second World War. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Fortenbaugh Internship, Special Collections, College Archive, Archives, World War II, WWII, War Memoir

Disciplines

Archival Science | Library and Information Science

Comments

The Interns at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library captured their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Over time the blog has featured Fortenbaugh, Smith, and Holley interns. They shared updates on semester long projects, responded to blogging prompts, and documented their individual intern experience.

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Blogging the Library

The Interns @ Gettysburg College's Musselman Library

Love and War: A Serendipitous Sweetheart Story

Wednesday, February 9, 2011

By: Sierra Green '11



Let me just say that I love that its my job to read and process the recorded memories of alumni during World War II. It is just so amazing to me that I can take part in the eternal preservation of these pieces of history! As I mentioned in my last post, I am in the midst of processing a collection of letters, papers and photographs compiled by the senior editor of the Gettysburg Magazine, Jerold Wikoff. Last week, I spent the majority of my time simply reading through and getting to know the stories of various Gettysburg alums that lived through the Second World War.

After I had finished reading the letters that chronicle each alum's World War II experiences, there were a series of folders with contents that I had not in the least expected. These letters addressed to Mr. Wikoff were in response to his request for what he called "Sweetheart Stories." For the Winter 1996 issue of the Gettysburg Magazine, Mr. Wikoff wanted to feature the stories of alumni who met here at Gettysburg and later got married all because of their time here on campus. Amazingly, Mr. Wikoff received around 70 of these sweetheart stories! As you can probably guess, they were such a joy to read. Each story had its own quirks and character which, admittedly, left me with a fuzzy feeling inside.

Hands down my favorite of these sweetheart stories was between a couple on campus in February of 1946. Returning from service in World War II, this ex-serviceman decided to attend the welcome back dance reception for returning veterans in Plank Gym. Upon his arrival in the gym, he caught the eye of a pretty girl. The two were introduced and, in

the words of this Gettysburg College alumnus, "that was it! We dated almost every night, walking the battlefield and one or two times at the movies, Faber's drug soda fountain, and the Lincoln Logs." Who is this sweetheart couple you may ask? They are none other than Robert and Esther Kenyon Fortenbaugh!

What a serendipitous occurrence! It was such a pleasure to learn about the love story of the very woman for whom my internship is named! I am so thankful that Dr. Fortenbaugh took the time to share the story of how he met the love of his life with Mr. Wikoff, and by extension, with me.

Above is the excerpt of Dr. and Mrs. Fortenbaugh's sweetheart story that was published in the Spring 1996 issue of the Gettysburg Magazine.

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