

George Christian Gebelein (1878-1945) Papers, 1904-1988
Wellesley Historical Society

Repository Identifier

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Name and Location of Repository

The Wellesley Historical Society
229 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
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Title

George Christian Gebelein (1878-1945) Papers

Date

1904-1988

Extent

1 box

Name of Creator

unknown

Biographical History

George Christian Gebelein, a nationally known silversmith, was born in 1878 in Bavaria, and immigrated to the United States at an early age, attending public schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was a silversmith's apprentice at Goodnough and Jenks, a Boston firm, after graduating from Cambridge's Harvard Grammar School in 1893. Afterwards, he became a journeyman silversmith for Tiffany and Company for four and half years in New York City. He then went to work for William B. Durgin Company in Concord, New Hampshire from 1897 until 1903.

In 1904 he joined the Handicraft Group, a group of tradesman, who worked and sold their goods together at Handicraft Shops in Boston and Wellesley Hills. Gebelein worked as silversmith with the Handicraft Group until 1908. In 1909, he opened his own family owned shop, Gebelein Silversmiths, at 79 Chestnut Street in Boston. Gebelein designed many cups and trophies for institutions such as Harvard College, St. Paul's School, and Yale. He held many honors and awards throughout his career from: Boston Society of Arts and Crafts, Chicago Art Institute, Panama Pacific Exhibition, and the Massachusetts Tercentenary Exhibition. He also taught his craft to students from fine arts schools (*The Townsman*, February 2, 1945)

Gebelein married Eva M. Pelren of Concord, New Hampshire, and they had seven children together: Margaretha Pelren (Leighton), George Jr., John Herbert, Ernest, Arthur, Esther (Swain), and Eleanor (Greene). In 1909, the family moved to Wellesley, Massachusetts,

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where they rented a house at 4 Cliff Road from the Badger family. The Gebeleins would later buy this same home. George Gebelein died on January 25, 1945 at his home in Wellesley.

Scope and Content

This collection contains materials relating to the George C. Gebelein's work as a silversmith, including photographs of items, brochures and catalog. There are also items about the Gebelein family, and some miscellaneous related materials.

System of Arrangement

This collection has been divided into three series: Business, Personal, and Other.

The Business series contains material related to George C. Gebelein's work as a silversmith. It includes catalogs, photographs and drawings of items, articles about Gebelein and his shop, including his time with the Handicraft Group. There are two scrapbooks about Gebelein and his shop included in this series; it is unclear who created these scrapbooks. Included in one of the scrapbooks (folder 6) is an article written by Gebelein, "Examples of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Domestic Silver with Interpretations of Same." There is also a sterling silver picture frame that was made by Gebelein, the picture has been removed to folder 8.

The Personal series contains a photograph of Gebelein, and articles and obituaries about Gebelein and his children. Also included is correspondence from and to Margaretha Gebelein, and a school report written by Esther Gebelein.

The Other series contains what appear to be labels that were used or meant to be used for an exhibit on Gebelein silver.

Conditions Governing Access

The papers are open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.

info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

(781) 235-6690

Physical Access

Some of the materials are fragile.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

English

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The sterling silver picture frame was donated by the Gebelein family on April 1988 (accession #1988.58). A photograph of a member of the Badger family was donated by Mrs. Eleanor (Gebelein) Greene in October 1988 (accession #1988.3)

Accruals

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Wellesley Historical Society

The Historical Society may add materials to the Papers in the future; however, no further accruals are currently expected.

Existence and Location of Originals

Wellesley Historical Society Family Archives

Related Materials

2015.06 Silver Porringer

Description

DACS Finding Aid created in January 2015 by Hilary Streifer, updated 2017.

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Appendix: Box and Folder List

Box 1: George Christian Gebelein Papers

Business

Folder 1: Gebelein Silversmith Catalog, 1986

Folder 2: Photographs and drawings of items, undated
Correspondence about items, 1913

Folder 3: Photographs from workshop, 1926, 1940

Folder 4: Articles about the shop, 1922

Folder 5: Scrapbook about Gebelein Silversmiths, circa 1959

Folder 6: Scrapbook with loose materials about Gebelein Silversmiths and Gebelein, 1904-1941,
undated

Folder 7: Handicraft Shop, 1906, 1982, undated

Folder 14: Sterling silver Gebelein frame, undated

Personal

Folder 8: Photograph of George C. Gebelein, undated
Travel voucher, 1943

Folder 9: Margaretha Gebelein Leighton, 1945, 1974, undated

Folder 10: Esther Gebelein Swain, 1923, 1961-1981

Folder 11: News clippings and articles about the Gebelein family 1945-1970

Folder 12: Badger family, 1988, undated

Other

Folder 13: Exhibit labels, undated