

M-62

Inventory to the Elsie Flink Papers

Processed and finding aid created by Stephanie Crawford, August 2020

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Flink, Elsie Victoria (1894-1996)

Title: The Elsie Flink Papers

Dates: circa 1895, circa 1916-1996, 2020 and undated

Collection Number: M-62

Quantity: .33 cubic feet (3/4 of a letter sized manuscript box and 1 small box for trinkets)

Abstract: The personal papers of Elsie Flink, Waterbury resident and personality. Flink worked at several factories and was a member of St. John's Church.

Language: English, French, Swedish

Repository: Max R. Traurig Library and Archive, Mattatuck Museum. Advance Notice Required.

Biography:

Elsie was born on November 8, 1894 in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her parents were Hilma Flink and Karl E. Flink and genealogy records indicate that Hilma and Karl immigrated from London to the United States, though they were originally from Sweden. Hilma died when Elsie was a small child, and she and her brother went to live with relatives. Olaf William Flink was Elsie's brother. He served in the military as a Chief Mechanic. He died of Meningitis in a hospital in France in 1918. Elsie married in 1918, but her husband left her shortly after and she remained independent.

For much of her adult life, Elsie worked in Waterbury factories. For a time she worked at the Waterbury Watch Company where she painted the glow-in-the-dark numbers onto the clocks. A radium girl – because workers were encouraged to lick the brushes to get a finer point, Elsie participated in a long-term study on the effects of radium poisoning, though she was never open about its effects on her. Elsie also worked at Scovill

Manufacturing Company. In the 1950s she inherited a small house in Middlebury, which can be seen photographs. Later in her life, she lived at the Elton Hotel.

Elsie was a member of St. John's church in Waterbury and was active in their choir and volunteered with the church's elderly feeding program. She had been a member of the church since she was 13 years old. In a newspaper article celebrating her 100th birthday, Elsie told the reporter that she once driven a car at 90 miles an hour. Elsie loved cats and several photographs from the 1990s depict her holding one or two cats on her lap. Being a Radium Girl, Elsie used to say that she glowed in the dark. She was incredibly smart, feisty, independent, and well loved by everyone who met her.

Scope and Content Note:

The Elsie Flink Papers are the personal papers of Waterbury resident Elsie Flink. The papers span circa 1895 through her death in 1996, with additional oral histories about Elsie from friends who knew her in 2020. Of special interest are two photographs from WWI – depicting the view from a trench and a bombed building. Additionally, researchers may be interested in two newsletters from the Center for Human Radiobiology from the 1980s which detail research into the long-term effects of radium poisoning.

The collection is paper based and contains physical objects. Document types include: correspondence, postcards, greeting cards, black and white photographs, color photographs, a small scrapbook, a book of common prayer, newspaper clippings, and hand written notes. Physical items include: painted silver leaves, pressed flowers from the Holy Land, a photograph in a daguerreotype case, 6 pins/broaches of which two are photographs, 3 small keys, a locket, a small cross for a necklace, 3 medallions, 1 small tin from Fascia's Chocolates in Waterbury, and 1 wrapper of a complimentary soap from the Elton hotel located on the Green in Waterbury.

The collection is housed in one manuscript box, and trinkets are housed in a small box. The collection is arranged chronologically.

Name and Subject Tracings:

World War, 1914-1918

Watch dial painters

Radium

Waterbury, CT

Flink, Elsie (1894-1996)

Administrative History:

Processing Note: Some correspondence and trinkets returned to Clair Rundhaug.

Preferred Citation: Elise Flink Paper. M-62. Max R. Traurig Library and Archive, Mattatuck Museum.

Provenance: Donated by Clair Rundhaug in 2020

Restrictions: None

Container List: This section provides descriptions of the materials found within each series. Each series description is followed by a container list, which gives the titles of the folders and their locations in the numbered boxes that comprise this collection.

Box Folder

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Souvenirs, pressed flowers from the Holy Land, undated |
| | 2 | Souvenirs, painted silver leaves depicting the USS Chicago, undated |
| | 3 | Scrapbook, undated |
| | | Common prayer book, 1911 |
| | 4 | Ephemera removed from scrapbook, 1971 and undated |
| | 5 | [40] Photographs – 3.5x5, 4x6, and odd sized, circa 1916 -circa 1990 |

Box	Folder	
1	6	Newspaper Clippings, Olaf William Flink, circa 1918
	7	Marriage program, 1918
	8	Correspondence, 1949, 1972, 1977, 1984, 1989, 1994 and undated
	9	Handwritten notes, circa 1970
	10	Correspondence, Center for Human Radiobiology, 1982 and 1985
	11	Newspaper Articles, circa 1990 and 1994
	12	Funeral, 1996
	13	Memories of Elsie, 2020
2		[1] Photograph in a daguerreotype box – possibly Elsie, undated
		[1] Medallion, Connecticut State Seal, undated
		[3] Small keys, Eagle Lock Terryville, CT, undated
		[1] Small cross, undated
		[2] Broaches, undated
		[2] Pins/broaches with photographs, brother and father, circa 1900
		[1] Pin, Driggs Grammar School, 1909
		[1] Locket – Engraved with her initials, opens to reveal a four leaf clover and small picture -probably Elsie. Purchased circa 1910 by Elsie
		[1] Medallion, The Richard E Byrd Antarctic expedition, circa 1930
		[1] Medallion, Connecticut Tercentenary, 1935
		[1] Bundles for Britain pin, circa 1940
		[1] Tin from Fascia's Chocolates, circa 1980
		[1] Elton hotel soap wrapper, circa 1980