

Military Collection
State Archives of North Carolina

Arthur R. Swaim Papers (WWI 68)
[World War I]

Collection Number: WWI 68

Title: Arthur R. Swaim Papers

Dates: 1907, 1919-1910, 1916-1919, 1924, 1928, undated

Creator: Arthur R. Swaim; American Expeditionary Forces

Abstract

The Arthur R. Swaim Papers is composed of correspondence, a wartime pocket journal, military service records, school books, photographs, artifacts, and miscellaneous materials, documenting the Mexican Punitive Expedition and World War I service of Arthur R. Swaim of Thomasville, North Carolina. Swaim Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, from 1916 to 1917, along the Mexican border during General Pershing's Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa. He also served in WWI in Europe with Headquarters Company, 60th Infantry Brigade, 30th Division, U.S. Army.

The collection consists of photographs taken by, taken of, or collected by Swaim while the North Carolina National Guard was stationed on the Mexican border. Of particular interest is a group photograph of the members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing on the steps of the square of the North Carolina State Capitol in Raleigh, North Carolina. There are also several letters written by or to Swaim, including a long letter in which Swaim details his military experiences and the horror of war to his father after the Armistice was declared in November 1918. Another interesting item is a small pocket journal kept by Arthur Swaim, documenting his military service between 1916 and 1919. The journal contains names of men in his unit, and movements of the Headquarters Company of the 60th Infantry Brigade in Europe in WWI. The collection also holds an oversized oval portrait of Arthur R. Swaim, kept by the Swaim family descendants since the war.

Physical Description: 0.4 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository

State Archives of North Carolina, 4614 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4614

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

Restrictions on Use: There are no restrictions on using this collection.

Preferred Citation

[Item name or title], [Folder Numbers], Arthur R. Swaim Papers, WWI 68, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

Acquisition

In April 2015, estate agent Ellen Marcus contacted the State Archives of North Carolina, regarding World War I historical materials which were included in an estate she was managing. The estate of the direct descendent of the Swaim family of Thomasville, North Carolina, included the Mexican border and WWI service materials from Arthur R. Swaim. As executor of the estate and owner of the materials, Marcus wished to have the materials preserved by a historical institution so the public could utilize the materials, and had the materials offered for sale.

The Friends of the Archives—a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization formed in 1977 whose mission is to support, promote, and strengthen the collections, services, and programs of the State Archives of North Carolina—purchased the Swaim collection, in order to donate the collection to the State Archives of North Carolina. Ellen Marcus completed the sale to the Friends in May 2015. In May 2015, the Friends of the Archives donated the materials to the Military Collection at the State Archives of North Carolina.

Separated Material

The oversized materials in this collection have been separated from the majority of the collection due to their size. Oversized Folder 1 containing the final roster of Company D, 120th Infantry (dated July 15, 1918) was relocated to an oversized, flat archival box and folder, and is marked with the collection number WWI 66. The box contains oversized materials for WWI 53 through WWI 90; the box is marked “Oversized” and has the collection numbers listed (see Collection Inventory for list of individual oversized item stored in this folder). One oversized document—a troop transport ship list for the Company D, 120th Infantry (undated)—is too large to fit within an archival box. It is stored in Oversized Folder 2, and has been relocated to a larger oversized folder stored in the Military Collection Oversized Map Case in the Archives Stacks 3B. Oversized Folder 2 is marked with the collection number WWI 66.

The smaller artifacts in this collection were stored in an acid-free artifact box, which has the collection number, collection title, box number, and range of artifacts written in pencil on the box lid. The small artifacts box is labeled WWI 66 Artifact Box 1, and are stored in “WWI Papers, Artifacts Box 2” at the end of the WWI Papers’ materials on the shelves in the Archives Stacks. The large American Red Cross cloth bag is stored in a large, flat artifact box, which has the collection number, collection title, box number, and range of artifacts on a box label. The large American Red Cross cloth bag is stored in “WWI Papers, Artifacts Box 3,” and is stored at the end of the WWI Papers’ materials on the shelves in the Archives Stacks.

A lead cavalry military officer on a horse figurine, made in France, was removed from the collection due to its chemical makeup and the health risks the figurine presents to staff of the State Archives and researchers.

The oversized oval portrait was labeled on the back of the portrait with the number “WWI 68.Oval.ArthurRSwaim,” and stored in the WWI “Oval Portraits” box containing oval portraits for WWI 40 and WWI 68 (both collections numbers are written on the box label).

Processing Information

The materials in this collection had no original order when they were received by the State Archives. The materials were organized in folders and boxes based on format or subject content of the items. Correspondence is arranged within a folder chronologically based on the dates written on the letters or from the content of the letters. All envelopes were discarded after any necessary information was added in pencil to the letters. Envelopes with unique information or dates were photocopied and attached to each letter, using an acid-free plastic clip. Paper-based service records and materials were divided up into folders based on their original use or content, and stored in acid-free archival file folders.

The photographs in the collection have been individually stored in an acid-free, archival plastic sleeves to allow for researchers to handle the original image without causing damage to the image’s surface, and to improve preservation during long-term storage. The photographs have been numbered with a soft HB No. 2 pencil on the back, according to the collection number, the folder number, and an individual image number. For example, the number “WWI 68.F6.1” should be interpreted as “WWI 68 collection, Folder 6, Photograph 1.” The identification of these images have been created in the finding aid, but not written on the photographs themselves. Historical research was conducted to provide an accurate description for the photographs.

The artifacts in the collection were removed and housed separately in acid-free artifact boxes. This will provide more stability for the artifacts in storage. Each small artifact box has the collection number, collection title, box number, and range of artifacts written in pencil on the box lids. Each artifact was assigned an “artifact number” containing a corresponding description of the artifact. Multiple artifacts were stored in the artifact boxes together. They were stored separately within each box using acid-free archival board, from which custom box dividers were created to insert in the boxes. These dividers break the boxes into quadrants, providing for more secure and individual artifact storage.

The oversized item in the collection has been removed from the collection and stored in an oversized folder and box (see “Separated Material” note for more information).

The oversized oval portrait of Arthur R. Swaim has caved in from its original convex shape, and has a number of areas where the surface of the image has chipped off over time. The portrait was never stored with the proper oval support piece such images usually were displayed with in frames. The oval portrait was removed from the original cheap wood frame with hand-lacquered coating and single pine backing board. The oval portrait is stored in an oversized box marked

with the collection number and the image number, and is stored at the end of the collection's arrangement in a separate oversized "Oval Portraits" box.

Processed by: Matthew M. Peek, February-March 2017.

Arrangement

The collection arranged in folders and boxes based on formats of the materials in chronological order. The collection is divided into four series: Series I: Arthur Swaim Military Materials; Series II: Arthur Swaim Personal Materials; Series III: Oversized Materials; and Series IV: Artifacts.

Biographical Note

Arthur R. Swaim (who went by the nickname "Polly") was born on October 9, 1894, in Davidson County, North Carolina, to Samuel Albert and Roelle Bodenheimer Swaim. Little is known about Arthur's childhood, other than that he grew up on the family farm in Thomasville, North Carolina. His father Samuel Swaim was a blacksmith for much of his life, working as a farm blacksmith and later as a farmer. Arthur Swaim would enlist in the North Carolina National Guard at Thomasville, North Carolina, on May 28, 1915. While he was serving in the National Guard, Swaim enrolled in Trinity College (now part of Duke University), and was a member of the freshman class in 1915. While at Trinity, Swaim had taken a German language class.

When the North Carolina National Guard was called to the Mexican border on June 19, 1916, as part of the Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa, Arthur Swaim entered federal service with his unit, Headquarters Company, 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade (known as the "Tar Heel Brigade"). Swaim spent a number of months along the U.S.-Mexican border in Texas and New Mexico on border patrol duty. After the United States entered World War I, Swaim's unit was called into federal military service. He would remain in the U.S. conducting training for service in Europe. Swaim reached the rank of Corporal on December 5, 1917; he would be promoted to Sergeant on March 5, 1918.

Arthur Swaim shipped out with his National Guard unit—now federalized as Headquarters Company, 60th Infantry Brigade, 30th Division, U.S. Army—on May 17, 1918, for Europe. Swaim served overseas until April 10, 1919. During his time in Europe, Swaim was returned to the rank of Corporal on August 14, 1918. Arthur Swaim was honorably discharged in the United States from active military service on April 14, 1919.

After the war, Arthur Swaim returned to Thomasville, North Carolina, where he would take up residency as a board in a family's house. By 1920, he worked as a foreman at a furniture company in Thomasville. Arthur Swaim married Odessa W. Rice, his childhood friend and a woman he kept in touch with through correspondence during WWI, on January 10, 1924, in Thomasville. Odessa's father Lee Rice was a dispatcher for the Southern Railway in Thomasville, and her mother's father was a prominent businessman and furniture company co-founder.

Arthur and Odessa Swam had their only child in 1925. Arthur Swaim became the Vice-President of the People's Building and Loan Association in Thomasville, North Carolina. Arthur Swaim committed suicide on June 29, 1928, in High Point, North Carolina, and was buried in Thomasville, North Carolina. He was 33 years old. Arthur Swaim left his young wife to deal with an alleged large amount of debt to his employer, which resulted in a number of legal issues for Odessa Swaim to struggle through in order to survive financially as a widowed mother. Odessa Swaim would later remarry in the 1930s.

Scope and Content

The collection is composed of correspondence, a wartime pocket journal, military service records, school books, photographs, artifacts, and miscellaneous materials, documenting the Mexican Punitive Expedition and World War I service of Arthur R. Swaim of Thomasville, North Carolina. Swaim Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, from 1916 to 1917, along the Mexican border during General Pershing's Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa. He also served in WWI in Europe with Headquarters Company, 60th Infantry Brigade, 30th Division, U.S. Army.

The collection is divided into four series: Series I: Arthur Swaim Military Materials; Series II: Arthur Swaim Personal Materials; Series III: Oversized Materials; and Series IV: Artifacts.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Swaim, Arthur R., 1894-1928

Places

Davidson County (N.C.)
Thomasville (N.C.)
Trinity College (Durham, N.C.)

Subject—Topical

North Carolina. National Guard
Southern Railway (U.S.)
United States. Army. Division, 30th
United States. Army--History--Punitive Expedition into Mexico, 1916

Material Types

Correspondence
Military records
Photographic postcards
Photographs

School records

Collection Inventory

Series I: Arthur Swaim Military Materials

Series I consists of correspondence, a wartime pocket journal, military service records, miscellaneous materials, and photographs, documenting Arthur R. Swaim's service on the Mexican Border with Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, from 1916 to 1917, as well as his WWI service with Headquarters Company, 60th Infantry Brigade, 30th Division, in the U.S. Army in Europe. The bulk of the series consists of photographs taken by, taken of, or collected by Swaim while the North Carolina National Guard was stationed on the Mexican border with General Pershing's Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa, as well as while Swaim's National Guard unit was in North Carolina. Of particular interest is a group photograph of the members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing on the steps of the square of the North Carolina State Capitol in Raleigh, North Carolina (see **WWI 68.F4.1**).

The series also contains several letters written by or to Swaim, including a long letter in which Swaim details his military experiences and the horror of war to his father after the Armistice was declared in November 1918 (see **Folder 1—letter dated November 28, 1918**). Another interesting item is a small pocket journal kept by Arthur Swaim during his WWI service in Europe, which also includes his unit's service history along the Mexican border in 1916-1917. The journal contains names of men in his unit, and movements of the Headquarters Company of the 60th Infantry Brigade in Europe (see **Folder 2**). The series includes Swaim's WWI leave paperwork and travel guidebooks used by Swaim while on leave in January 1919 (see **Folders 8-9**).

Folder	Description	Date
1	Swaim War Correspondence	1918
2	Lettie Green Letter to Arthur Swaim	October 1, 1918
3	Arthur Swaim's Wartime Journal	1917-1919
4	Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Group Photograph	circa 1916

WWI 68.F4.1: Group photograph of the members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing on the steps of the square of the North Carolina State Capitol. The photograph was taken around the time that the unit served in General John J. Pershing's Mexican Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa between

1916 and 1917. The capitol building and a statue of George Washington are seen in the background. Pictured are: (first row, left to right with an unidentified person in this order) Marshall R. Schell; Sgt. Glenn C. Yount; Sgt. Maj. Charles A. Coeney; (middle row, left to right); Frank W. Caldwell; Milton Poole; Lonnie L. Adams; Fred B. Cates; John B. Hill; (back row, left to right) Arthur R. Swaim; Robert R. Duckett; Herbert A. Mooneyham; and Fred Poole (circa 1916).

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North Carolina National Guard Photographs

circa 1916-1917,
undated

WWI 68.F5.1: Snapshot of an unidentified woman, wearing a white blouse, long skirt, and wide-brimmed black hat, standing on a lawn in front of a two-story farm house (Undated) [believed to be taken in a rural area either in North Carolina or along the U.S.-Mexican border].

WWI 68.F5.2: View of an unidentified member of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing in front of several military tents in a military camp at an unidentified location. Trees and a clothesline are seen in the background. The unit name can be seen written out in abbreviated form using stones on the ground in front of the unidentified soldier (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.3: View of Lonnie L. Adams of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing at the opening to a military tent in an unidentified camp (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.4: Group photograph of seven members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, posing on the edge of a lake at an unidentified location while they were camped nearby (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.5: View of an unidentified member of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, pictured on a horse near a line of trees. Photograph while the brigade was camped nearby (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.6: View of an unidentified member of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, pictured on a horse near a line of trees. Photograph while the brigade was camped nearby (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.7: View of Frank W. Caldwell of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, pictured on a horse near a line of trees. Photograph while the brigade was camped nearby (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.8: View of an unidentified member of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, pictured on a horse near a line of trees. Photograph while the brigade was camped nearby (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.9: View of Frank W. Caldwell of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing at the opening to a military tent in an unidentified camp (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.10: Group photograph of nine members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, posing in their military camp with brooms. Some of the men are goofing around in the image. Parts of the camp and several U.S. Army tents can be seen in the background (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.11: Group photograph of seven members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, posing on the edge of a lake at an unidentified location while they were camped nearby. Several of the men are lying on the ground. Arthur Swaim (lying down, far right) is pictured. Caption on back of photograph reads “Polley & Pals” (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.12: View of an unidentified member of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing in front of a wooden military camp building. The soldier’s pants are wet up to his hips, and he is holding a cigarette in his hand (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F5.13: View of an unidentified woman, wearing a dark-colored wool coat and a velvet hat, holding a horse by the reins, as an unidentified member of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, is pictured on his horse in the background (circa 1916) [believed to be taken during General John J. Pershing’s Mexican Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa between 1916 and 1917].

WWI 68.F5.14: Snapshot of cows feeding in a corral. The silhouette of a U.S. Army soldier can be seen on the ground (circa 1916) [believed to be taken during General John J. Pershing's Mexican Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa between 1916 and 1917].

WWI 68.F5.15: Snapshot of three members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, standing in front of a ranch structure. Pictured are: (left to right) unidentified soldier; Robert R. Duckett; and Arthur R. Swaim (circa 1916) [believed to be taken during General John J. Pershing's Mexican Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa between 1916 and 1917].

WWI 68.F5.16: Snapshot of either an explosion of a dust cloud at an unidentified location in a desert area, with two unidentified soldiers walking away from a cloud of dust rising up from the ground (circa 1916) [believed to be taken during General John J. Pershing's Mexican Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa between 1916 and 1917].

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Mexican Border and World War I Photographs

circa 1916, 1919
undated

WWI 68.F6.1: Photograph of Arthur R. Swaim of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, posing on top of the Franklin Mountains around El Paso, Texas, along the Mexican border, at 6,200-feet above sea level. Photograph taken while the North Carolina National Guard was stationed on the Mexican border with General Pershing's Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F6.2a-c: Photograph of U.S. Army Signal Corps members on a rock outcrop somewhere along the U.S.-Mexican border, using a heliograph to send signals. Arthur R. Swaim (second from left) of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, is pictured. Photograph taken by A. L. Fletcher, a news correspondent for the *Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer*, while the North Carolina National Guard was stationed on the Mexican border with General Pershing's Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F6.3: Real-photo postcard of six members of Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, sitting on the ground in front of a

military tent in an unidentified camp. One of the men is pointing a handgun at Arthur R. Swaim (front row, far right). Photograph taken while the North Carolina National Guard was stationed on the Mexican border with General Pershing's Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F6.4: Real-photo postcard of a group of men from the Headquarters Co., 1st North Carolina Infantry Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, posing in their wool swimsuits on an unidentified beach [either in Texas or in North Carolina]. Other U.S. soldiers are pictured in swimsuits in the background standing on the beach. One soldier in full uniform is pictured standing at right in the photograph (circa 1916).

WWI 68.F6.5: Real-photo postcard of a view looking at a part of the deck of the *USS Powhatan* (ID-3013), a U.S. Navy troop transport ship, as U.S. servicemen are pictured standing on any available space on the deck while leaving a French harbor for a trans-Atlantic voyage during World War I. Caption on the photograph reads: "U.S.S. Powhatan." Postcard mailed by Swaim to Lena Brown in Briscoe, N.C. (Undated).

WWI 68.F6.6: Real-photo postcard of a view looking out along the side of the *USS Powhatan* (ID-3013), a U.S. Navy troop transport ship, at a storm at sea during a trans-Atlantic voyage in 1919. Postcard has original names of school friends written on the back, along with Swaim's name (circa 1919).

WWI 68.F6.7: French real-photo postcard of a studio portrait of an unidentified U.S. Army soldier, wearing his uniform, during World War I (Undated) [Photograph by: Paul Croissy, Nice, France].

7	American Expeditionary Forces General Orders, No. 44	November 18, 1918
8	Swaim Army Leave Pass and Paperwork	January 1, 1919
9	Saint-Malo and Surroundings Travel Guidebook	circa 1918
10	Miscellaneous Mailed Cards and Postcards	1907, 1918-1919
11	Miscellaneous Materials	1918-1919, undated
12	Swaim's WWI Pocket New Testament	Undated

Series II: Arthur Swaim Personal Materials

Series II consists of a small number of items from the non-military life of Arthur R. Swaim. The series includes two school books used by Swaim during his youth; several miscellaneous congratulation cards and notes for Swaim on his wedding; and a funeral memorial cards for his death in 1928. The most significant item within the series is a German language class test answers Blue Book, used by Swaim for his German class at Trinity College (now part of Duke University) around 1915 while he was a freshman. This test book shows Swaim's proficiency in German, the knowledge of which he undoubtedly found useful during his WWI service in France, Belgium, and Germany (**see Folder 14**).

Folder	Description	Date
13	Swaim's Childhood School Books	1909-1910
14	Swaim's Trinity College German Class Test Book	circa 1915
15	Swaim Wedding Congratulations	1924
16	Swaim's Funeral Memorial Card	June 1928

Series III: Oversized Materials

Series III consists of two original oversized items from the WWI service of Arthur R. Swaim. The oversized items have been arranged within the corresponding size of archival storage box and acid-free folder. One of the oversized items is Swaim's personal copy of *The Tar-Heel War Record*, containing his handwritten name and some other notes on the inside cover pages and back page of the book. The cover of the book was ripped off when first received by the State Archives. The other item is an oversized oval portrait of Arthur R. Swaim, kept by the Swaim family descendants since WWI.

Folder	Description	Date
Oversized Folder 1	<i>The Tar-Heel War Record</i> (Swaim's Personal Copy)	circa 1921

Oversized Oval Portrait

WWI 68.Oval.ArthurRSwaim: Oval portrait of Arthur R. Swaim, pictured wearing his U.S. Army uniform and seated on a horse with a stand of trees in the background (circa 1910s).

Series IV: Artifacts

Series IV contains five original artifacts used or received by Arthur Swaim during his WWI service between 1917 and 1919. The artifacts include: Swaim's original dog tags; two copies of the 30th Division Old Hickory Medal given in Greenville, South Carolina, to the unit in September 1919; and two eagle pendants.

Box	Description	Date
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Artifact Box 1

Artifact 1: Two original dog tags on a rope, worn by Arthur R. Swaim while serving in Europe with Headquarters Company, 60th Infantry Brigade, 30th Division, U.S. Army, during World War I (Undated).

Artifact Box 2

Artifact 2: One original 30th Division Old Hickory medal, presented by the city of Greenville, South Carolina, to members of the 30th Division, in Greenville in September 1919 (September 1919).

Artifact 3: One original 30th Division Old Hickory medal, presented by the city of Greenville, South Carolina, to members of the 30th Division, in Greenville in September 1919 (September 1919).

Artifact 4: One original World War I-era metal U.S. Army "eagle" pendant, with the eagle's wings spread apart, connected to a clasp [likely worn on a uniform], attributed to being used by Arthur R. Swaim (Undated).

Artifact 5: One original World War I-era metal U.S. Army "eagle" pendant, with the eagle's wings spread apart, intended to be worn on a necklace or ribbon [likely worn on a uniform], attributed to being used by Arthur R. Swaim (Undated).