Anna Coile Durham Collection

1919

Collection Number: MSS 684
Size: .21 linear feet

Special Collections and University Archives
Jean and Alexander Heard Library
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee
Historical Sketch:

Born of the tragedies of World War I, the Permanent Blind Relief War Fund for Soldiers and Sailors of the Allies developed into the largest war relief organization in the world outside of the American Red Cross. George A. Kessler of New York founded the organization after his experience aboard the German torpedoed Lusitania. After escaping this experience with his life despite being drawn under with the sinking ship and exposure to extreme weather, Kessler dedicated his life to relief for the war sufferers. Between its founding in the spring of 1916 and May, 1919, the Fund raised more than $1.5 billion to help sightless soldiers of eight nations—America, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Serbia, Rumania, and Portugal. Because of its connections throughout the Allied world, King George of England in December, 1918, selected the Permanent Blind Relief War Fund as the medium through which to send to the sightless soldiers of the Continental Allies a message of gratitude and encouragement in French Braille.

Scope and Content Note:

This .21 linear foot collection consists of the booklet King George sent to blind Allied soldiers in French Braille. An English translation of King George’s message is included. The collection also contains a letter written by the organization’s founder George A. Kessler which is written in French. In addition, a letter to Anna Coile Durham from the Permanent Blind Relief War Fund is included which was sent to her with this copy of King George’s message.

Container List:

1. Greeting in Braille from King George of England to all Blind Soldiers of the Allies, 1919