



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Manuscript Collections

FELIX E. BOGDAN:

An Inventory of His Papers at the Minnesota Historical Society

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

- Creator: Bogdan, Felix E., 1914-1986.
Title: Felix E. Bogdan papers.
Date: 1942-1945.
Abstract: Correspondence and miscellaneous papers documenting the World War II experiences of Felix E. Bogdan, who served as a medic with the U.S. Army 134th Medical Regiment Division. Bogdan was stationed in Illinois, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, New York, North Africa, and Italy during World War II.
Quantity: 2.2 cu. ft. (6 boxes).
Location: See Detailed Description section for shelf locations.

BIOGRAPHY OF FELIX BOGDAN

Felix Edward Bogdan was born on February 5, 1914 in Minnesota. He was one of five children born to Stanley Bogdan and Cecilia Winkowski Bogdan, who were both originally from Poland. Felix had three brothers named Joseph, Victor, and Anton, and a sister named Josie.

Bogdan served as a medic while in the army. His letters begin with him doing basic training at Fort Sheridan in Illinois. He arrived at Fort McClellan in Alabama on March 22, 1942. He was stationed in Alabama until August 31, 1942, when he arrived at Field Headquarters, Second Army in Nashville, Tennessee. Here Bogdan performed ambulance duty while in the 134th Medical Regiment Company D at the 16th Evac. Hospital. Bogdan arrived at Camp Blanding in Florida on November 12, 1942. Felix and his girlfriend, Jo-Anne Herman of Columbia Heights, Minnesota, were married in November or December of 1942 while Felix was on a furlough. In March of 1943 Bogdan was sent to New York City and in April of 1943 he went overseas with the Army. It is unclear which country he was stationed in first; in a letter dated May 10, 1943, Bogdan discusses the beautiful French and Italian

women, but states that he is not allowed to disclose what city he is near. In June of 1943 Bogdan was shipped to North Africa.

According to his death certificate, Felix worked as a mason for Orrin Thompson homebuilders. His funeral notice states that he was a member of the American Legion Westphal Post #251, Bricklayers & Craftsman Local #2, and St. Raphael's Holy Name Society.

Bogdan died on December 18, 1986 in Crystal, Minnesota. He was survived by Jo-Anne, their daughter Jo, two grandchildren, and all of his siblings. Jo-Anne Herman Bogdan died on September 13, 2004.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE PAPERS

Correspondence is primarily with his wife Jo-Anne. Bogdan was a prolific writer, often sending out more than one letter each day. Many of his early letters include 'secret' notes professing his love scrawled on the inside of the envelopes. Felix refers to the city of Columbia Heights, Jo-Anne's residence, as the "Land of Love" both in the letters and on the envelopes. Bogdan's letters are often 4-6 pages long (written on both the front and back of the pages) and he quite often apologizes that they are not longer. The main topic of these letters is his love for Jo-Anne and his regret that they are separated. It is evident that Jo-Anne wrote back often, but her letters are not included in the collection.

The letters in the collection dating from March 1942 to December 1942 concern the courtship of Felix and Jo-Anne. During this period there are pieces of correspondence between Jo-Anne and Felix's family, particularly from his brother Tony and his mother. Mrs. Cecilia Bogdan had her neighbor, Mary Marzari, write the letters to Jo-Anne for her as she was unable to write in English. The courtship was not without problems, however. In September 1942 Felix wrote to Jo-Anne to tell her that he had to break things off with her as he had had a romantic encounter with another woman one night after drinking with his Army buddies. He tells her that he is no good for her and that she must find someone new, that he will never write to her again after disappointing her in this way. Felix also sent a letter to Jo-Anne's brother, Wally, dated September 23, 1942, which states that he feels Jo-Anne should find someone better than him and that he will no longer write to her. Shortly afterwards, however, things appear to have been mended as Felix begins writing to Jo-Anne once again with the same fervor that he had previously, professing his love for her again in daily letters.

Felix's letters to Jo-Anne also discuss his desire for her to go out and have fun, urging her to go dancing with her sister Mary and their friends. Jo-Anne was working two jobs, which displeased Felix. He asks her many times in his letters to only work one job as she was wearing herself out and falling ill frequently. Felix

also urges Jo-Anne to buy herself a fur coat. He writes that he does not support her desire to join the Women's Army Corps; if she were to join, their relationship would be over.

In his writings Bogdan also discusses the social aspects of military life, including gambling, going to the cinema, and watching bands and comedians perform. He does not write often about his duties in the Army, nor does he write much about his fellow soldiers. After Bogdan is sent overseas his letters become shorter and he often mentions that he cannot write as much as he would like to due to censorship. A couple of his letters have sections cut out, and all of the envelopes are stamped by an inspector. Bogdan's letters were, from then on, only written on one side of a piece of paper. His letters do not come as often and they are sent either via Air-Mail or V-Mail. Bogdan writes of his desire to be at home with his wife, and of the family that they would both like to start.

Two undated items are placed at the beginning of the collection: a napkin on which Felix has written a letter to Jo-Anne, and a ration book for Jo-Anne Zielinski with a sugar ration book for Felix Bogdan inside.

INDEX TERMS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

- Army spouses -- Minnesota -- Columbia Heights.
- Courtship -- Minnesota.
- Love letters.
- Soldiers -- Minnesota -- Correspondence.
- Soldiers -- United States -- Family relationships.
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Italy
- World War, 1939-1945 -- North Africa.

Persons:

- Bogdan, Cecilia Winkowski.
- Bogdan, Jo-Anne Herman.
- Bogdan, Tony.
- Bogdan family.
- Herman, Mary.

Marzari, Mary.

Zielinski, Wally.

Organizations:

134th Infantry Division Association.

United States. Army. Infantry Division, 134th.

United States. Army -- Medical personnel.

United States. Army -- Military life.

Places:

Camp Blanding (Fla).

Fort Sheridan (Ill.).

Fort McClellan (Ala.).

Minneapolis (Minn)

Document Types:

V-mail.

Occupations:

Soldiers.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation:

[Indicate the cited item and/or series here]. Felix E. Bogdan Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.

See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples

Accession Information:

Accession number: 16,032

Processing Information:

Processed by: Alissa LaChapelle, September 2006

Catalog ID number: 006572495

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

Location Box

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| P332 | 1 | War ration book, undated. 1 volume.
Letter to Jo-Anne written on a napkin, undated.
Letters home, March-June 1942. 4 folders. |
| P332 | 2 | Letters home, July-December 1942. 6 folders. |
| P332 | 3 | Letters home, 1943. 10 folders. |
| P332 | 4 | Letters home, January-June 1944. 6 folders. |
| P332 | 5 | Letters home, July-December 1944. 6 folders. |
| P332 | 6 | Letters home, February-June 1945. 4 folders. |