

R Recklein, William (1872-1962), Papers, 1898-1903  
51 3 folder

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#### INTRODUCTION

The papers of William Recklein contain family photographs and correspondence. Included in the correspondence are news of family, friends, and daily life.

#### DONOR INFORMATION

The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Nettie Snyder on 18 September 1980 (Accession No. 54). An addition was loaned for copying on 11 June 2014 by the Crawford County Museum (Accession No. 1607).

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Recklein (1872-1962) was born to a St. Louis German family. He served in the First Missouri Infantry during the Spanish-American War before marrying another southside German, Ida S. Rau, in 1902. A banker, Recklein became an officer of the Bank of Cuba in Crawford County in 1906. He and Ida made their homes in Cuba for the remainder of their lives and were prominent in community affairs until Ida's death in 1955. Afterward, William became the town's most notable benefactor when he bought and donated for public use Cuba's historic public school buildings, including the fieldstone edifice that is now home of the Crawford County Historical Society. Recklein also funded a new library in Ida's memory, dedicated a few months after his own death in 1962. The Reckleins had no children.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers include letters written during Recklein's service with the First Missouri Infantry at Chickamauga Park, Georgia in 1898. There are also letters written by Recklein to his future wife, Ida S. Rau of St. Louis dated from 1900-1902.

In 2013, the Crawford County Historical Society loaned for scanning two Recklein photograph albums and miscellaneous photographs including an image of William Recklein in uniform. The albums, circa 1902-1903, contain photographs of home life and social activities in St. Louis. Many feature William and Ida in recreational pursuits with Recklein's sisters (he had six) and in-laws.

The latter category is noteworthy for its documentation of summertime outings by the Reckleins and his sisters to the Gasconade River hamlet of Schlicht, near Crocker in Pulaski County. The Reckleins were among the earliest urban family groups to vacation on the Gasconade in northern Pulaski County. The images in the photograph albums illustrate the beginnings of a railroad-based vacation industry, but also that bathing, boating, fishing, and other recreational activities on the river were not solely the domain of men. Women, in fact, outnumber the men in the Recklein images, including Ida Recklein and several of William's sisters (although they are not individually identified). Proprietor John Schlicht promoted his peaceful millponds as the ideal place for women to

learn the art of fishing before venturing out on the wild Gasconade, and several of the Recklein photographs suggest that some of the women in the party were competent anglers. Others show entertainments including some of the party costumed as “Schlicht Indians,” a tongue-in-cheek placard listing the rules of decorum at the lodge, and views of the buildings, millponds and spring. Perhaps the most singular photograph in the collection shows the Recklein party waiting for the return train at Schlicht “station.” The view of the trackside passenger shelter is the only known photograph of the simple structure that marked the beginning and end of hundreds of summer vacations at a once-favored tourist destination in the Ozarks.

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