

William Samuel Murphy, World War I soldier

Around 1919, the Kansas State Historical Society and the American Legion solicited biographical information from returning veterans (primarily members of the 35th and 89th infantry divisions) and the families of those who died in service, notably from the Gold Star Mothers. Each veteran or family member was asked to provide letters, photographs, a biography, and military records. This file contains information on William Samuel Murphy, surgical assistant to ward surgeon, Letterman Hospital, Presidio, California. William died at the military hospital in Presidio on January 15, 1918.

Date: 1917-1919

Callnumber: World War I Coll. #49, Box 32 Kansas Soldiers

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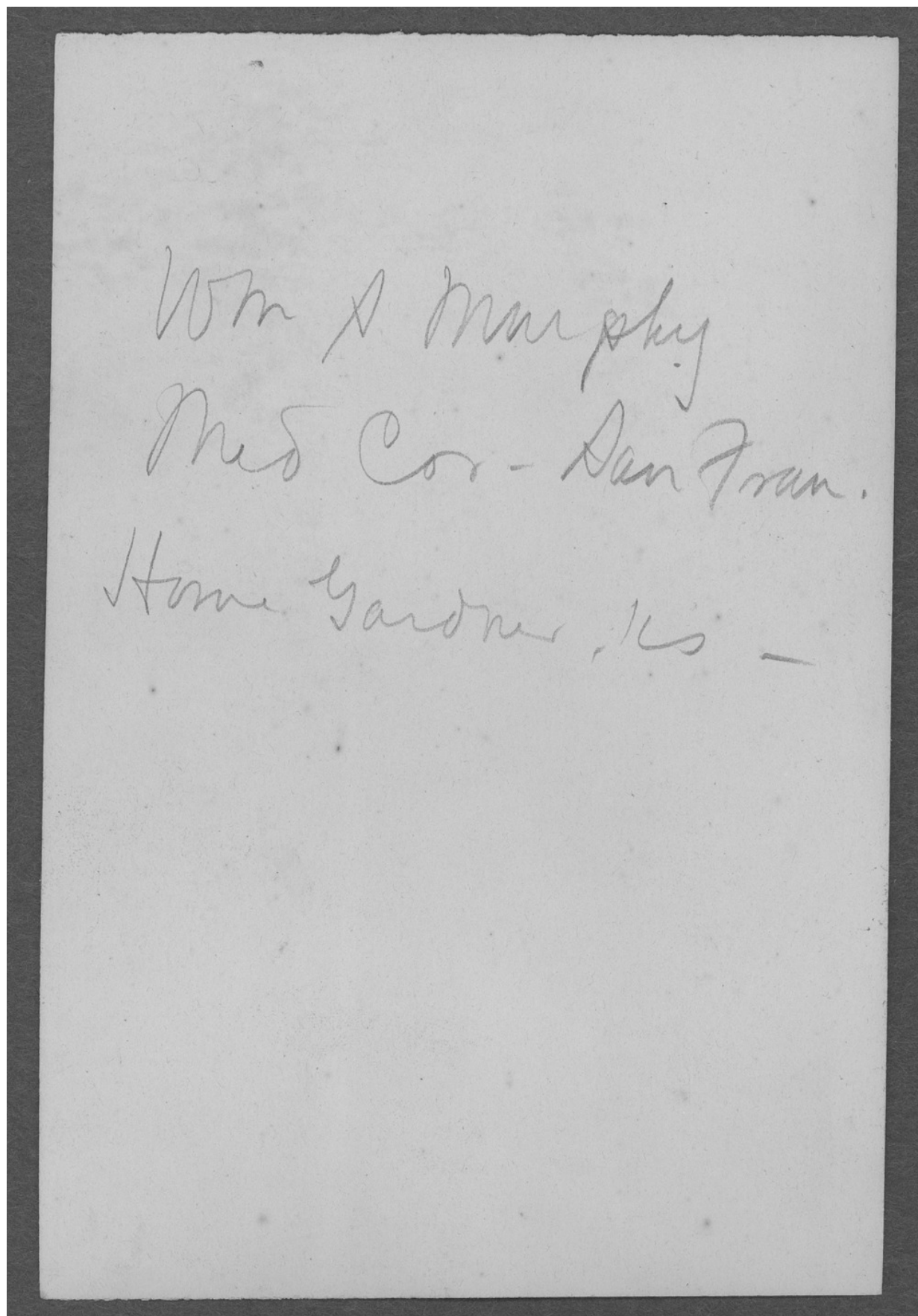
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SOCIETY

William Samuel Murphy, World War I soldier



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UNITED STATES POSTOFFICE

P. J. MURPHY, POSTMASTER

GARDNER, KANSAS

12-----25-----17,

Dear Folks,

This is Xmas day, and I am thinking of you back there wishing you the best that may be, I received the watch and am very much pleased with it, it was just what I needed and the cigars and paper and red cross pkg, and of course the Red Cross out here also gave us a pkg, I think they are a wonderful organization, Our dinner here today was a wonder, I will send you one of the menu cards, but of course it was rather lonesome after all and it is raining very hard, I have a new position I am quartered with 100 officers The ~~Medical~~ Medical Expedition to Romania bunch that were called back by wireless after two days at sea for France, they all have their fu

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full equipment and are a wonderful bunch of men, they are not supposed to have any enlisted men in their outfit but I am trying my best to get to go over with them , they are all Lieutenants, Captains, and Majors and were doctors before being called from all parts of the U.S, It would be a wonderful opportunity for me, Believe me this is a real war and I want to go right ^{through} the worst of it, if necessary to succeed in winning, which is only a matter of time, you know that draft bunch from Chicago, ^{mother} you sent me the clipping about, they are drilling them right out here next to our barracks and they are sure putting them through some sprouts, Well I have been promoted to Private First Class and Surgical assistant we wear the round chevrons on our arms with the Medical Caducia in the center, I am enclosing one of them, I am holding a Sergeants job tho'

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and the officers all call me Sergeant I am well pleased with the army
life and am awfully anxious to get ahead,
Mother these sick and crippled soldiers come from everywhere and you
know there is bound to be sickness in such a large number of men as
are in the army now, and a great many accidents happen around the Camps
Letterman hospital is one of the largest and best Military hospitals
in this country, I am glad you liked the flag, Thanks for the stamps
pappa And all the presents and wishing you the happiest of New Years

I am as ever with love,

Your Son Will.

William Samuel Murphy, World War I soldier

UNITED STATES POSTOFFICE

P. J. MURPHY, POSTMASTER

Gardner, Kansas,

2-----25-----19,

Mr, William E Connelley, Secretary,

Topeka Kansas,

Dear Sir, As requested I am sending you a
picture of our son William S Murphy, and a copy of the last letter
written home, and also a copy of the obituary, from the home paper here
in Gardner where he grew to manhood,

Sincerely Yours,

P. J. Murphy

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A Brave Young Soldier at Rest.

"He was a volunteer in the Great World War, waged to secure, once for all, liberty for all mankind." Let this be the epitaph of William S. Murphy, the first Gardner boy who died in the service of his country. Higher tribute cannot be paid.

And how like this warm-hearted, cheery, friendly dispositioned young man it was to offer his services when his country called. Not on impulse did he act, for all the sickening horrors of the European battle fields were a familiar story to him. He volunteered because under that sunny exterior, there was seriousness of purpose and patriot fervor—because he loved his country and humanity. To him is due all the honor which a grateful country may bestow upon those who have faced the enemy's hail of death and died upon the field of action. For, after all, it is the motive which counts. He knew the horrors which, as a soldier, he must face, and, yet, he volunteered.

Life was sweet to this young soldier. Well educated and talented, he had a position on one of the country's great newspapers, the San Francisco Chronicle and was advancing in his chosen profession. The future was bright with promise but when his country called, he did not hesitate but, immediately after the declaration of war, offered his services and was assigned to the medical corps, a position for which, because of his cheerful and kindly disposition, he was eminently fitted. Just a short time before his death, he had been promoted to private first class and surgical assistant to ward surgeon in Letterman Hospital, Presidio, one of the largest military hospitals of the nation.

*Letterman Hospital -
Presidio San Francisco*

In one of his last letters home he wrote that he realized that this was a real war but that he wanted to go through the worst of it, if necessary, to help in winning—and that the winning of the war was only a matter of time. This shows the true spirit of patriotism.

That he had endeared himself to his associates, is shown by the magnificent funeral wreath of magnolia leaves and roses which they sent, accompanied by a letter of sympathy, bearing fully 200 signatures.

William S. Murphy was a Gardner boy, having been born here Dec. 31, 1888. He grew to young manhood here and received his early education in the schools of his native town, afterward attending Kansas University and Washington State University and was a member of the Sigma Nu fraternity. He worked on newspapers in Kansas City and Chicago going to the San Francisco Chronicle two or three years ago on which paper he was employed at the time of his enlistment. He died in the Military Hospital, Presidio, San Francisco, California Jan. 15, 1918, age 29 years and 15 days.

The funeral services were held Wednesday afternoon, Jan. 23, at the Presbyterian church. The funeral sermon was preached by the pastor, Rev. Stephen H. Jones, who paid eloquent tribute to the soldier dead. The address was interwoven with patriotic sentiment and deeply moved the great congregation, which taxed to the uttermost the seating capacity, both of the auditorium and lecture room, chairs being placed in the aisles, and yet it being necessary for many to stand. The pulpit and altar rail were draped with the "colors." "Seldom has there been seen so many splendid floral tributes, testifying mutely, of the love and honor in which this young soldier rests secure, after having given to his country "The last full measure of devotion."

Of the immediate relatives left to mourn the passing of this brave young soldier, there are, the parents, Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Murphy, of Gardner; and sisters, Mrs. O. T. Leftwich, Chapman, Kansas; and Mrs. E. R. Stine, Weiser, Idaho. With those left to mourn, the people of the community will mingle their tears but, with the passing of the years, there will come a solemn pride in this young soldier and each year a grateful people will strew blossoms of tender remembrance upon "The little green tent beneath which he takes his rest." The burden of grief to-day lies heavily upon the hearts of mother, father and sisters; that mother who has been a ministering angel in so many of the homes of Gardner; that father who has been counsellor, guide and friend through the passing years to so many of his neighbors; those sisters who shared their childhood with their soldier brother and cherished him in their hearts. But sympathetic hearts of friends and neighbors ask to have a share in that grief, for this young soldier, who sleeps his last sleep beneath his native skies of Kansas, is a part of the precious heritage of a grateful people. He belongs to his community, his country, to the world whose liberties he sought to defend against a cruel foe. God bless him and keep him safely in the omnipotent arms of love.

Card of Thanks.

We wish to express our appreciation to the friends and neighbors who in so many ways, showed their sympathy, during the death and burial of our beloved son and brother, and who were so kind and thoughtful through the strenuous days of waiting. Also for the beautiful floral offerings.

MR. and MRS. P. J. MURPHY,
and DAUGHTERS.

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From Governor Capper.

The following letter of sympathy, written by Governor Capper has been recieved by Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Murphy.

January 23, 1918.

My dear friends:

I note in the press dispatches the death of your beloved son while in the army service in California. I Desire to express my most heartfelt sympathy in the sorrow which prevades your hearts and home. While no words of mine can soften the grief you feel, you must find consolation in the fact that your dear boy gave his life for hie country and in the sacred cause of liberty for the world.

It is a bitter cup that is now put to the lips of this nation. but this hour of trial was inevitable. There was no way to avoid it. Many more strong young men will fall on the field and in camp and it is my earnest prayer that you and the friends of all who are called upon to make this supreme sacrifice, may be comforted and sustained by the consciousness that the sacrifice is made in the highest cause to which a man can give his life. May God bless you.

In deepest sympathy, I am most sincerely yours,

ARTHUR CAPPER,
Governor.

Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Murphy.
Gardner, Kans.