



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

Canisius family photograph album, ca. 1918-1930

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2012

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Canisius family photograph album
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.026
Date:	1918-1930
Extent:	1 photograph album (7 x 12 in.)
Creator:	Canisius, Kathryn L., 1906-1943 Canisius, Elizabeth, 1882-1977
Language:	English
Digital Content:	Image(s): Canisius family photograph album: ca. 1918-1930

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Donald Kritsch and Barbara Baker;, Gift;, 2012;, 2012-0065.

Processing Information

Processed by Heather Shannon, Photo Archivist in 2012.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Canisius family photograph album; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Access is by appointment only, Monday - Thurs., 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment.

Biographical / Historical

Elizabeth Canisius (1882-1977) was the daughter of Frederick Nimz (1845-1921) and Louise Longere (1848-1923). Frederick and Louise were married in 1872 and in 1873 emigrated from Germany to the United States. The couple settled in Indianapolis, IN, where Frederick worked as a carpenter and cabinet maker for a furniture company. They had seven children: Minna Nimz Stelzel (1873-1935), Wilhelm Nimz (1875-1932), Ernestine Nimz Walters (1876-1947), Emma Nimz Crane (1879-1911), Elizabeth Canisius, Katherine Nimz Lang (1885-1973; the donor's grandmother), and Louis Nimz (1887-1966). Elizabeth married Gustav Canisius (1872-1954) and the two lived in Indianapolis, Chicago, IL, and perhaps also Wisconsin. (Elizabeth compiled NMAI's album while living on Congress Street in Indianapolis.) While living

in either Chicago or Wisconsin, Gustav worked as a shipfitter on Great Lakes steamers. Kathryn "Dolly" L. Canisius (1906-1943) was the only child of Elizabeth and Gustav. She never married and usually lived with her parents. In 1933, Dolly graduated from Pestalozzi Froebel Teachers College in Chicago.

Scope and Contents

The Canisius family photograph album was primarily compiled by Elizabeth Canisius (1882-1977) of Indianapolis, Indiana, and contains photographs made from about 1918 to 1929 by her and various members of her immediate and extended family. Evidently not arranged in chronological order, the photographs document a burgeoning German-American family and their various pursuits. Among the photographs are depictions of unidentified men at work in a shipyard, among them Mrs. Canisius's husband Gustav (1872-1954); unidentified men playing polo or dressed for a game of basketball; men, women, and children posed in front of both urban and rural houses; and choice mid-West vacation spots, including the Great Lakes, Lincoln's tomb and home (Springfield, IL), Turkey Run State Park (IN), and Williams Bay (WI) and its famous Yerkes Observatory.

A good number of the photographs document the young adulthood of Kathryn (Dolly) L. Canisius (1906-1943), the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Canisius. These photographs depict Dolly, her classmates and friends, her teachers, her suitors, her leisure activities, her graduation from high school in 1924, and two years later her apparent graduation from a two-year college. Following her 1926 graduation, Dolly evidently served as an itinerant teacher-in-training and from several teaching posts sent photographs of her young pupils to her mother. These her mother dutifully added to the album, even though Dolly had annotated most of the photographs' versos. Among Dolly's photographs are depictions of her white pupils in a rural mid-West school and of her Native students at Standing Rock Agency in Fort Yates, North Dakota. The Standing Rock photographs consist of depictions of Dolly's female and male Native students posed in groups and on picnics, non-student Natives congregated in town, street scenes, landscape views (including the frozen Missouri River) presumably made just outside of Fort Yates, Agency buildings, and possibly the campus of Saint Bernard Mission School, established by Father Bernard in 1924. There are also several commercially produced photographs, including a studio portrait of Holy Horse distributed by the Northwest Photo Service of Mandan, ND, and a photographic postcard of the "rugged country on Standing Rock Reservation" by Frank B. Fiske. Dolly apparently also traveled as far as Medora, ND, and sent to her mother photographs of the Chateau de Mores, the former home of Medora's founder the Marquis de Mores, and of the Little Missouri River.

Arrangement

The album arrived at NMAI disbound with some photographs missing from various album pages. The individual album pages were rehoused inside paper envelopes, however original order was maintained.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Cultures:

Indians of North America -- Photographs -- Education -- North Dakota

Names:

Canisius family -- Form subdivision--Photographs

Canisius, Kathryn L., 1906-1943 -- Form subdivision--Photographs

United States. Office of Indian Affairs. Standing Rock Agency -- Form subdivision--Photographs

Geographic Names:

Fort Yates (N.D.) -- photographs

Indianapolis (Ind.) -- photographs

Standing Rock Indian Reservation (N.D. and S.D.) -- photographs