

Archives and Special Collections

Dickinson College

Carlisle, PA

COLLECTION REGISTER

Name: **Frey, J. William (1916-1989)** **MC 2003.7**

Material: Photograph Album (1937-1938)

Volume: 0.25 linear feet (1 Document Box)

Donation: Gift of Friends of the Library, 2003

Usage: These materials have been donated without restrictions on usage.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John William Frey was born on July 23, 1916, the only son of Howard C. and Margaret Frey. While attending junior high school in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Frey developed a taste for languages, taking Latin, German, Spanish, and Italian. At John Harris High School, he studied French, Russian, Esperanto, and Volapuek. Family vacations in York County also led to an interest in the dialects and customs of the Pennsylvania Dutch.

Graduating from high school in 1933, Frey enrolled at Dickinson College; although he expanded his studies to include Modern Hebrew and Mandarin Chinese, he concentrated mainly on German and was a four-year member of the German Club. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1937 with special honors in German; he was also awarded with the chance to study abroad as an exchange student. Frey attended the University of Giessen during the academic year of 1937-1938. During this time he also took courses in Marburg and Munich in Germany as well as at the Università della città in Rome and at the Sorbonne in Paris. Upon his return to the United States, Frey accepted a graduate assistantship in German and French at the University of Illinois. He continued his studies while teaching, earning his M.A. in 1939 and his Ph.D. in 1941; his dissertation research was a thorough analysis of the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect.

From Illinois Frey moved on to Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, where he taught German and French as well as Russian. He remained in Clinton for two years before teaching conversational German to American officers at Lehigh University as part of the Army Specialized Training Program from 1943 to 1944. Frey then joined the faculty of Franklin and Marshall College as Professor of German, Russian, and Linguistics. During his 36-year tenure there, he also taught various languages at Dickinson and the Language Institute at Millersville University, and pursued post-doctoral work at Cornell University from 1945 to 1946.

Researching the teaching of Russian in non-Russian nations, Frey visited the former Soviet Union more than fifteen times, once traveling across the entire republic on the Trans-

Siberian railroad. He also became a leading scholar of the Pennsylvania Dutch culture, authoring several books, articles, and even an album of songs. Frey continued his research after his retirement in 1980, writing and teaching courses in Pennsylvania Dutch.

Frey met his wife Jean Kratz of Baltimore, Maryland at Dickinson; both were members of the Class of 1937. The couple had three children, two daughters and a son, Allan, who graduated from Dickinson in 1965. Sadly, Jean contracted polio in 1954 and spent the last years of her life as a paraplegic before succumbing in November 1967. J. William Frey died on August 21, 1989 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The J. William Frey Photograph Album contains photographs chronicling his year in Giessen, Germany; he titled it “Mein Jahr in Deutschland’: A Year of Attending College in 1937-1938 Nazi Germany.” Captions in both English and German were written on the pages. The subjects of the photographs range from people that Frey lived and traveled with to locations in Germany, France, and Italy. While few of the people featured have been completely identified by Frey, the album contains several images of him with his friends and his wife Jean. The collection also contains loose photographs that have been removed from the album; where applicable, the caption and page number associated with the photograph have been written in pencil on the reverse. Some of the photographs appear to have been taken later and included with the others; these images are in color and are possibly of Frey and family in later years.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

BOX 1 - MC 2003.7

PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM

- Folder 01) Scrapbook, 1937-1938
- Folder 02) Folder of loose materials

This collection register was prepared by Michele M. Tourney, September 2003.