OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Author: Emil (Porter) Thomas
Title: Emil (Porter) Thomas Letters
Date: April 1923-July 1929
Abstract: Letters written by Thomas during his service in the US Marine Corps, to his future wife, Beatrice Keeran in Cleveland, Ohio.
Quantity: 1.3 cu. ft.

BIOGRAPHY OF

Emil Thomas was born on April 23, 1906. He has two sisters in which he calls Minnie and Lill. His father remarried during his years in service and he gained a stepsister and stepmother. He entered the Marine Corps on June 11, 1925 and was discharged on July 30, 1929. During his service, he was stationed in: Paris Island, South Carolina; Quantico, Virginia; Hampton Roads, Virginia; Leon, Nicaragua; Ocatal, Nicaragua; Telepaneca, Nicaragua; and League Island, Pennsylvania. Porter, as he was called, was a very musical person. He played trombone, tenor banjo, violin, mandolin, and the clarinet. His favorite and most specialized instrument is the clarinet.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

Researchers interested in the day-to-day life of a Private in the US Marine Corps during the late 1920s, will find a lot of information defined in the Thomas letters. Such as brief descriptions of a military funeral, K.P (kitchen police) duty, band outings and practice, marine training, sick wards, sea travel, rules and regulations, and day-to-day social interactions. Because of Emil being stationed in Nicaragua there is brief information concerning Sandino, the election of General Jose Maria Moncade (an Independent candidate), the US Marine positions in the Nicaragua election, and what his general experience was like. There is information concerning the dating norms, family roles and relationships, prejudices, ideals for females, and many others. There is
also much to be learned about the general life of the common person, respectfully, such as forms and accessibility of travel, extra curricular activities, what books were read and what movies were watched, and what some common goals for the standards of living were.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION**

These records are organized into the following series:

These records are organized chronologically from April 1923 to July 1929.

Abbreviations with in content list:

N/A

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Restrictions:** The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Ohio University Libraries.

**Preferred Citation:** Researchers are requested to cite the collection name, collection number, and the Ohio University Libraries, in all footnotes and bibliographical references.

**Accession Number:** #00-13

**Provenance:** The Ohio University Archives received the collection in spring of 1998, from Professor Tom Walker.

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**Photoduplication:** Ohio University will entertain requests to photocopy reasonable amounts of material from the collection for the convenience of individual researchers.

**Processing:** Caitlin Borbely processed the collection in April 2001.
**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

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

**CONTAINER LIST**

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<tr>
<th>Box/Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / 1</td>
<td>Brief description of Marine training on Paris Island, North Carolina; April 1923; 1 letter; Cleveland, Ohio</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Detailed description of Marine training, KP duty, and activities at the rifle range, information concerning Emil's musical talent and interests, courses from the Marine-Corps Institute, and brief news concerning the incident upon the Shenandoah; September 1925; 4 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>February 1926; 1 card, sender unknown; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>More information concerning his course work and his fear of Beatrice's father; June 1926; 2 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>July 1926; 1 letter; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>August 1926; 3 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>September 1926; 4 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Description of a military funeral, his expertise in the area of rifleman and marksman on the pistol, and talk of local football; October 1926; 6 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Emil asked Beatrice to marry him (November 25, 1926) and she kindly turned down the offer; November 1926; 7 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>December 1926; 10 cards and 2 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Description of the “hole,” military prison, and more detailed reports of Marine training; January 1927; 2 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>February 1927; 3 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Hand written copy of the Marines Hymn; March 1927; 7 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>April 1927; 5 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>May 1927; 11 letters; Quantico, Virginia</td>
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</table>
Beatrice agrees to marry Emil, talk of her friends Helen and Anne; July 1927; 11 letters; Quantico, Virginia

October 1927; 7 letters; Quantico, Virginia

November 1927; 7 letters; Quantico, Virginia

Emil has an abscess on his left thumb and they soak his hand in bichloride of mercury to 10,000 strength; December 1927; 4 cards and 15 letters; Quantico, Virginia

First brief mention of Sandino, Emil has his aviation wings; January 1928; 23 letters, Quantico, Virginia

Emil thinks that he is going to Port Au Prince, Haiti, but first ends up in a naval operating base in Hampton Roads, Virginia; February 1928; 19 letters; Quantico, Virginia

Emil does not think that “any white man should be killed to save a few ignorant niggers, with out whom the world would be much better off.” He was once enraged to a blond named Evelyn-this is where he learned to mistrust blonds. He finds out he is not going to Haiti but to Nicaragua. There are details of the sea voyage on the USS Oglala. He is in the 61st Machine Gun Company, Eleventh Regiment; March 1928; 21 letters; Hampton Roads, Virginia; Norfolk, Virginia; USS Oglala; Navy Yard, Virginia

April 1928; 7 letters; Leon, Nicaragua

May 1928; 8 letters; Leon, Nicaragua

June 1928; 4 letters; Leon and Managua, Nicaragua

He walked from Leon to Ocatal, Nicaragua (180 miles). He was going to Telepaneca to run an election booth; July 1928; 5 letters; Ocatal, Nicaragua

August 1928; 7 letters; Ocatal, Nicaragua

September 1928; 7 letters; Ocatal and Telepaneca, Nicaragua

October 1928; 8 letters; Telepaneca, Nicaragua

General Jose Maria Moncade, the liberal candidate,
was elected President of Nicaragua. The Marines set out on a thirty day search for Sandino; November 1928; Ocatal, Nicaragua

Telepeneca and Ocatal, Nicaragua

4 / 34 December 1928; 4 letters; Ocatal, Nicaragua

35 There is a Marine Patrol arranged by the new President to find Sandino. There will be a bunch of “gook generals” to lead the disguised Marines to all of the bandits. The Marines are accompanying the Moncado Volunteer National Troops, of whom are mostly ex-bandits. Emil was expected to go on this search; January 1929; 8 letters; Ocatal, Nicaragua

36 They caught one of Sandino’s best generals, General Jiron. They had one contact with Salgado; February 1929; 1 card and 1 letter; Ocatal, Nicaragua

37 Emil has returned to the United States. He received a poison monkey bite, for which he is in the Navy Hospital at League Island, Pennsylvania; March 1929; 6 letters; Managua, Nicaragua; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; League Island, Pennsylvania

38 He returns to Quantico, Virginia; April 1929; 20 letters; League Island, Pennsylvania

39 May 1929; 9 letters; Quantico, Virginia

40 June 1929; 8 letters; Quantico, Virginia

41 He was discharged July 30, 1929; July 1929; 13 letters; Quantico, Virginia

42 No dates; 12 wedding cards

43 Fragments