This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

INTRODUCTION

The papers of Kemper Military School, the oldest military school west of the Mississippi River, include student records and transcripts, applications, commencement material, diplomas, grade cards, and miscellaneous material.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Kemper Military School Records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Danielle A. Blanck, Mayor of the city of Boonville, and Stephen Read, Trust Donor and Chairman, Friends of Kemper Foundation Trust, on 18 January 2006 (Accession No. 6100). An addition to the collection was made on 25 January 2006.

RESTRICTIONS

Consult the reference staff about the restriction on this collection.

INSTITUTIONAL SKETCH

Kemper Military School and College was founded as the Kemper Family School in 1844. It was the oldest military school west of the Mississippi. The school was founded by Frederick Thomas Kemper (1816-1881) as an all-male school to educate the sons of the early frontier families. From 1845 through 1856 it was known variously as the New Boonville Academy, the Boonville Boarding School and Teacher's Seminary, and the Male Collegiate Institute.

The school was temporarily closed in 1856 and reopened in 1861, allowing female students to attend. This was discontinued at the close of the Civil War. Around 1871, to differentiate Kemper students from the local population, Kemper placed his students in military uniform. Following his death, Colonel Thomas A. Johnston became President (1881-1928). Johnston added the military training program and structure and changed the school's name to Kemper Military School in 1899.

From the 1900s up to the 1950s, the school saw an increase in the growth of both its physical structure and student population. In addition, classes and programs were added and improved. Kemper Military School saw a marked decline in cadet enrollment beginning in the 1970s, which in turn created financial difficulties. In 2002, Kemper Military School closed its doors.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Kemper Military School Records are arranged into three series: Student Records, Commencement Material, and Miscellaneous Material.

The Student Records series are arranged alphabetically by the student's last name, for the most part, although later boxes are not necessarily in alphabetical order. The records consist of applications, transcripts, grade reports, grade cards, disciplinary action reports, instructor
comments, and in some cases, transcript request correspondence along with previous school records, medical reports, and test results.

This material will prove useful to researchers interested in studying grading systems of secondary schools. It will also be of interest to genealogists wanting to know about the educational history of a family member or relative. For example, many of the earlier student files contain detailed comments made by instructors regarding the student, some of which refer to observed personality traits.

The **Commencement Material** series consists of programs, graduate and honor lists, class officers, academic, athletic, and military achievements. Also included in this series are student diplomas which were never issued. The series is fairly well dated, though many of the files are not in chronological order.

The **Miscellaneous Material** series consists of dance cards for the annual military ball, school and course brochures, school advertisements, and a copy of the *Kemperite*, Kemper's alumni magazine, Winter, 2001. Also included is a copy of the *Kemper Literary Review*, which was created by Kemper students, and a copy of the Ceremony of the Standard of Honor.

There is some correspondence from 1992 from Jim Gatewood, Director of Development and Public Affairs, to Walter Bixby of the J.B. Reynolds Foundation, regarding a request for funds to pay for a computer system that would track student records and perform other computer needs in the Registrar's Office, and letters to and from Susan Moellinger, Registrar, regarding course descriptions for transfer to different schools and programs.

Also included are forms for submitting names for diplomas, along with some actual diplomas, student application files, and grade cards, listing name of cadet, year, age, class, date entered, previous school attended, subjects listed, semester taken, grade, semester average, and units/hours earned. The grade cards for those students who dropped out are also included, giving the date the student dropped out. On some cards, grade point averages are shown. Up until 1962 cards also list one of the parents and the address of the previous school attended. The grade cards are dated from 1957 to 1990.
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