Kneedler Family Papers
MS 55

Summary Information
Creators
Kneedler Family
Kneedler, A. Richard.
Kneedler, Robert G.
Kneedler, Jay I.
Kneedler, Alvin R.

Title
Kneedler Family Papers

Dates
1893-1965, 1923-1925; 1961-1965 (bulk)

Extent
1 LF (2 ms. boxes)

Arrangement
Collection organized into two series corresponding to early 20th century Kneedler brothers, Alvin, Robert G. and Jay I. and late-20th century Kneedler nephew, A. Richard.

Language of Materials
All materials in English.

Abstract
This collection consists of letters, photographs and other material relating to four members of the Kneedler family of Greensburg, PA who attended Franklin and Marshall College in the 20th century. The collection is divided into two series. The first contains the papers of the 3 Kneedler brothers, Alvin R. (member of the Class of 1918); and, Robert Glen, and Jay Ivan Kneedler (members of the Class of 1927) who attended F&M in the early 20th century. The second series contains the personal papers of A. Richard Kneedler, a 1965 graduate of Franklin and Marshall College during his years as a student. Kneedler's professional and

Contact information:
Archives and Special Collections
Martin Library of the Sciences
Franklin and Marshall College
850 Harrisburg Ave. - P.O. Box 3003
Lancaster, PA 17604-3003
717-291-4225 or 717-358-4433
Fax: 717-291-4160
Email: archives@fandm.edu
www.library.fandm.edu/archives
official papers during his years as Professor of French, Administrator, and President of the
College from 1988-2002, can be found in the College Archives- RG 05, subgroup 13-
President Kneedler files.

**Subjects**
Kneedler family--Pennsylvania--Greensburg.
Franklin and Marshall College--Alumni and alumnae--Biography.
Franklin and Marshall College--History.
Franklin and Marshall College--Students.
Kneedler, A. Richard--Correspondence.
Kneedler, Robert G.--Correspondence.
Kneedler, Jay I.--Correspondence.
Kneedler, Alvin R.--Correspondence.

**Administrative Information**
**Acquisition Information**

**Custodial History (Provenance)**
All of the materials in this collection were donated to the Archives and Special Collections

**Access Restrictions**
Access unrestricted.

**Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use**
Photocopying and publication may be restricted by copyright. Permission to publish must
be secured from the repository and copyright holder.

**Preferred Citation**
Kneedler Family Papers (MS 55), Archives and Special Collections, Franklin and Marshall
College

**Processing Information**
Processed by Michael Lear, January 2003; December 2015. Description based on DACS.

**Appraisal, Destruction, and Scheduling Information**
All materials received relating to A. Richard Kneedler’s administrative roles at Franklin and
Marshall College (ie. materials related to College business) were separated from this
donation and added to the records of Franklin and Marshall College.

**Accruals**
No further accruals are expected.

**Additional Information**
**Alternate Form of Materials (Location of Copies)**
Transcriptions of Series I letters available.
Related Materials
Records of Franklin and Marshall College, President Kneedler Records (RG 05/13), Archives and Special Collections, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA, USA

Historical/Biographical Information
No additional information.

Scope and Content Note
[The majority of the collection consist of] 59 letters written home by Robert Glen Kneedler and Jay Ivan Kneedler, both members of Franklin & Marshall's Class of 1927, during their freshman and sophomore years at the College. They may be of particular interest for their documentation of various details of student life at F&M in the middle of President Henry Harbaugh Apple’s tenure, including the bellicose interactions of freshmen and sophomores, the degree to which students lived and socialized in town, the tenor of student-faculty relations, the rigor (or the lack of rigor) of academics, the focus on athletics, the role of religion in student life, their connection with their parents, the period’s fascination with transportation technologies, among other issues.

The Kneedler brothers were the 2nd and 3rd members of their family to attend Franklin & Marshall, following in the footsteps of their older brother Alvin, who had enrolled at the College in 1914. All three of the brothers left F&M before graduation, Alvin, after his freshman year to enroll in the University of Pittsburgh School of Dentistry (where he graduated in 1920 with a DDS degree), and Robert and Jay, after their freshman and sophomore years at F&M, to transfer to Cornell University so that Jay could pursue a degree in engineering. Robert was approximately 10 months older than Jay and they were in the same class throughout school, [as far as is known]. Robert was very interested in the humanities and foreign languages, both classical and modern, while Jay was the incipient engineer, generally doing much better in math and science.

There are many references in the letters to individuals at Franklin & Marshall who crossed the brothers’ paths and who are well known in the College’s history. Among them are Professors Beck, Mull, Truxal and Weisgerber. Also mentioned several times is President Henry Harbaugh Apple. Students whom they knew who later taught at Franklin & Marshall included Mike Lewis and Kenneth D. Longsdorff.

[In addition] there are references to other students whose names are not familiar [but surmised to be] Greensburg or Western Pennsylvania F&M students the Kneedler Family would have had reason to know.

There are also many references to the names of various theaters, hotels and other places in Lancaster, including the Fulton Opera House. The Kneedler brothers often went to the movies, the theater, vaudeville, lectures, even an organ recital by Marcel Dupre in the City of Lancaster. It was an active place and they took major advantage of it, much as Henry Kyd Douglas had done 75 or so years earlier. As he had, they traveled about Lancaster on foot. However, they also took the trolley in the City and hitchhiked to travel in the region, as they most notably did when they went to Carlisle via Harrisburg to attend an F&M/Dickinson football game and took the opportunity to sightsee in the state capital and even saw Gov. Gifford Pinchot out taking a constitutional.
The letters have certain repetitious themes that are not surprising for college boys, including the need for food and money, the joy of having those two necessities, and the apprehension of not having money. Other favorite topics were sports, cars and airplanes. The brothers appear to have missed few athletic contests on campus and to have played a lot of tennis during their years in Lancaster (which they continued to do through most of their lives). They were, necessarily, faithful attendees at chapel because of the requirement, but might well have gone a good deal even absent the requirement, knowing their habits later in life.

A recurring character is Mrs. Frey, a Lancaster lady who lived with her family on Nevin Street and rented out rooms to F&M students. She played a significant role in their lives, providing them with treats like apples, cookies and pies, and ministering to them when they were sick or injured.

Spelling was not the brothers’ strong suit. "There" and "their" were often confounded, for example. "Recieve" was a favorite spelling of an oft-used word. It magically corrected itself in sophomore year letters. The names of individuals are often rendered in various ways.

To help the reader follow some of the comments, it might be helpful to know the following cast of characters and references from Western Pennsylvania:

Mother and Father: Guy Kneedler was a general contractor and Maude Kneedler, a homemaker.

Aunt Kate: Katherine Painter, Maude Kneedler’s unmarried sister, lived with Guy and Maude.

Alvin: Robert and Jay’s elder brother and my father was a dentist in Greensburg.

Fred: Robert and Jay’s younger brother was in public school in Greensburg.

Bing: An Airedale terrier renowned in family lore for having an independent mind, a fierce loyalty to his owners, and absolutely no inclination to be trained.

Greensburg: The county seat of Westmoreland County, PA where the Kneedler Family lived. Greensburg at the time sent a good many young men to Franklin & Marshall because the Evangelical and Reformed Church was strong in Greensburg. The Kneedlers belonged to the Second Reformed Church in Greensburg, now the Trinity United Church of Christ.

Lincoln Highway: U.S. Route 30, which passes through both Lancaster and Greensburg and therefore provided the most direct highway connection between the two towns.

William Penn Highway: U.S. Route 22, which passes north of both Lancaster and Greensburg and therefore could have provided an alternate highway connection between the two towns.
Pennsylvania Railroad: At the time of the letters, the Pennsylvania Railroad mainline passed through both Lancaster and Greensburg (it is now Amtrak in Lancaster and Norfolk Southern in Greensburg). The Pennsy, as it was known, had extensive passenger train service between New York and Chicago and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, most of which served Lancaster and Greensburg. When Robert and Jay traveled to college or home, they used a Pennsy train unless their brother Alvin drove them. The Pennsy also carried the mail and provided fast mail service between Greensburg and Lancaster, encouraging frequent communication by letter.

Richard Kneedler
January 20, 2002

Inventory/Contents

Box/Folder

Series I  Alvin R., Robert G. and Jay I. Kneedler Papers
1/1  Guy Emery Kneedler, Sealed Unto Christ, a confirmation Manual, 1893/94

1/2  Alvin Kneedler- Political Science paper :"The Chief Political Principals of the Chief Political Parties of 1912." Dated November 11, 1915.

1/3  Alvin Kneedler- 4 Postcards from Alvin Kneedler to family, (3) Sept. 12, 1914, January 5, 1915.

1/4  Alvin Kneedler- Greensburg High School Catalogue 1910-1911; Greensburg High School Commencement Program, 1914; University of Pittsburgh commencement program, 1920.

1/5  Alvin Kneedler- Photographs of Franklin and Marshall College, 1914-1915. (6)

1/6  Alvin Kneedler letter to Uncle Jay I. Kneedler, Monday [April 12, 1943]

OSDR  Alvin Kneedler- Photographs Greensburg High School class of 1914. (2)

1/7-1/24  Letters of Robert and Jay Kneedler, 1923-1925
June-July 1923
September 1923
October 1923
November 1923
December 1923
January 1924
February 1924
March 1924
April 1924
May 1924
June 1924
September 1924
Undated [October 1924?]
November 1924
December 1924
January 1925
February 1925
April 1925

1/25 Photographs and postcards of campus buildings, people (family), local landmarks ca. 1923-1925

2/1 Freshman beanie/dink cap belonging to Jay Kneedler, ca. 1923.

Series II A. Richard Kneedler Papers

Student Years
3/1 Correspondence
3/2 Addresses/Essays/Articles
3/3 Memorabilia/ pamphlets/clippings
3/4 Award certificates/diploma
3/5 Photographs (graduation, student life, local area, campus)
OSDR Fraternity group photograph

For professional and official papers: see College Archives- RG 05/13- President Kneedler files.

rev 03/03/2016 mrl