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A Guide to the
Alvin C. Kraenzlein Scrapbooks
1898-1985 (bulk 1898-1900)

1.0 Cubic feet

UPT 50 K89

Prepared by J.M. Duffin

December 2010

With later additions by Alyssa Sheldon

August 2012

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PROVENANCE

Donated by Susanne Tvede in 2010 (accession 2010:67) and Bodil C. Tvede in 2012 (accession 2012:41).

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is organized into two series: Scrapbook and Loose Items (which were formerly housed in the scrapbook). The contents of the scrapbook are arranged chronologically and the Loose Items series is arranged by topic.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alvin Christian Kraenzlein was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on December 6, 1876 to German immigrants Johann Georg Kränzlein and Maria Augusta Schmidt. The family moved to Milwaukee,

Wisconsin soon after he was born. He began competitive running and jumping at Milwaukee's East Side High School where his special talents quickly caught the eye of local athletes. After enrolling at the University of Wisconsin in 1895, he dominated his intercollegiate opponents in many speed events. Mike Murphy, the University of Pennsylvania's famed track coach, soon noticed Kraenzlein and influenced him to come to Penn. Murphy would later describe Kraenzlein as the "world's best all around athlete of his time."

In the fall of 1897, Kraenzlein came to the University of Pennsylvania as a student in the Dental School. He became a member of Psi Omega dental fraternity and the Edwin T. Darby Dental Society, but his primary extracurricular activity centered on the track and field. During his tenure at the University of Pennsylvania, Kraenzlein set world records for the 120 meter high hurdles and the 220 meter low hurdles; he developed a new form of gliding over the hurdles, clearing the hurdles with the lead leg extended, which became the standard technique for modern hurdlers. By the time Kraenzlein graduated from Penn, his versatility and skill had helped the Red and Blue win four straight intercollegiate championships while setting records in the process. His records in the hurdles would last for decades both on the intercollegiate and world level and many of his feats would live on in Penn track and field lore.

As a member of the Penn track teams of 1898, 1899 and 1900, Kraenzlein set nine records in intercollegiate and Olympic competition. In the 1900 Olympic Games, Alvin set a record by winning four individual gold medals: the 60-meter run, the 110 meter hurdles, the 200 meter hurdles and the long jump. This feat would not be duplicated until Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Kraenzlein's record accumulation of 18 points at the 1900 Intercollegiate Championships, propelling the Penn team to another victory in that arena, was just as noteworthy as his Olympic achievements in the eyes of his contemporaries.

After receiving his dental degree in 1900, Alvin coached track teams at Mercersburg Academy and the University of Michigan and led both teams to very successful programs. In 1913 he signed a five-year contract to coach the German Olympic team for a reported salary of \$50,000. Kraenzlein did go to Germany under the contract to begin training the Kaiser's Olympic team and lived in Berlin until the Kaiser warned him that war was going to break out and it would be wise to leave. He returned just before the war broke out. After the war his coaching positions included time with the Cuba track and field team. In August of 1927, Dr. Kraenzlein fell seriously ill with heart disease and within five months, on January 6, 1928 in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, he succumbed to his illness. Upon his death he was still revered as the best athlete ever to wear the Red and Blue of the University of Pennsylvania and, in some people's view, the best athlete of their time.

Alvin Kraenzlein married Claudine Gilman, daughter of the artists Claudine Scott Gilman and Benjamin Ferris Gilman, in 1902. They had one child who lived to adulthood - Claudine Gilman Tvede

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Alvin C. Kraenzlein scrapbook documents the peak period of Kraenzlein's competitive athletic career in 1899 and 1900 when he participated in the Paris Olympics. The scrapbook contains press coverage from a variety of newspapers and magazines published in Philadelphia and New York and photographs of Kraenzlein running in various events. Additional biographical material copied from other sources as well as correspondence on Kraenzlein's career and induction into the Olympic Hall of Fame in 1984 can be found in the collection.

The 2012 addition to this collection, the Alvin C. Kraenzlein 1898-99 scrapbook, documents Kraenzlein's athletic career from 1898 to 1899. The scrapbook contains press coverage from a variety of newspapers and magazines published in Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and New York, covering Kraenzlein's athletic achievements while a student at the University of Pennsylvania.

CONTROLLED ACCESS HEADINGS

Corporate Name(s)

- Olympic Games. (2nd : 1900: Paris, France)
- University of Pennsylvania. -- General subdivision--Students.;

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INVENTORY

SCRAPBOOKS	Box	Folder
Susanne Tvede Scrapbook 1899-1900	1	1
Bodil C. Tvede Scrapbook 1898-1899	1	9
LOOSE ITEMS	Box	Folder
Certificate of membership in University of Pennsylvania track team at Olympic Games 1900	1	4
Newspaper clippings 1899-1900	1	2
Newspapers and magazine clippings 1939-1984	1	3
Olympic Hall of Fame induction 1984-1985	1	6
Photocopies of material concerning career 1963-1984	1	7
Photocopies of material concerning career 1984	1	8
Photographs c. 1900	1	5