

History 210: Search and Seizure #4
Archival Documents: Letters
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For this assignment, you will utilize the Gist Collection in the Humboldt Room. This collection is unique to the Humboldt Room and HSU. It consists of letters from over 300 World War II service men and women who were either students at HSU or recent graduates. President Arthur Gist corresponded with many of these students, and HSU shipped its students and alumni newsletters, so that they could keep up with events on their college campus during their term of duty. The students responded to Gist with news of their whereabouts.

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Your first task is to choose 5 separate letters (by different people) from your assigned folders and to read and analyze them. Choose letters from persons writing **from abroad** (not from those stationed in the U.S.) and be sure that the letters you choose are substantial enough for analysis (avoid letters that say little more than “hello, I’m fine, miss HSU, goodbye”). As you read each letter, take notes according to these guidelines:

From where did the student/alumni servicemen write and at what point in the war were they writing?

What did the student/alumni servicemen and women write about?

How did they seem to be experiencing the war and the places they were stationed?

What things did these correspondents NOT write about? What do you wish they had included in their letters and why?

Your second task is to search for some context on HSU during the World War II era. The library workshop will highlight some sources for HSU history, including copies of the University’s yearbook and *The Lumberjack*. Your task is simply to browse through a few of these primary sources (at least 2 copies of the yearbook; at least 2 copies of *The Lumberjack*; or a combination of these or other appropriate sources). You are looking for some general information that would shed light on what life was like at HSU during the war, and how life reflected or was affected by the war years. Take some notes, including representative quotes or specific pieces of information that you can incorporate into your paper.

After reading the letters and other sources carefully and taking notes, compose a **brief (around 6 pages) paper** in which you summarize in your own words, the experiences of your 5 servicewomen/men during World War II, and **analyze** those experiences according to the note-taking guidelines given above. Be sure to mention where these servicemen/women are, what stage the war is in, etc. You must also include a total of at least 3 direct quotations (from any combination of the letters). Obviously, **you must properly cite/footnote** all of your quotes, but you should **also cite any paraphrased information** from the letters as well. Also include a brief section (one or two paragraphs is sufficient) detailing the information you found about HSU life during the war. **The final section of your paper** must be a reflection on the use of letters as primary sources. For this reflection, you must include information from the appropriate section of *Going to the Source* (specifically “Letters Home from Vietnam”). What are the advantages and disadvantages of using letters as a historical source?