

## USER GUIDE to the Minker Family Collection

The 656 letters and the scrapbook contained in the Minker Family Collection have been transcribed and indexed to make it easier for researchers, teachers, and students to locate first-hand information from this unique collection.

### How to Search the Minker Collection

**1. Define your research question:** *How did rationing impact Wilmington? How were young men trained to be pilots in WWII? What role did women play in WWII? Is my Delaware relative mentioned in the letters? How did people on the home front react to the war? What did Wilmington do for civil defense?*

**2. Review the 28 themes** (listed below) with 93 topics for the 571 citations in the index to locate the topic and the letters relevant to your search.

447<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, Army Air Corps, A. I. duPont High School, Blue Hen Chick (B-17), Brandywiners, Casualties, Civil Defense, Election – 1944, England, Ferris School, France, Grace United Methodist Church, Germany, Homefront News, Italy, Japan – War in the Pacific, Minker, Edna, Minker family, Minker, Ralph Lee, Planes, Post War, **Rationing**, Sports, Taylor, Julia, Tower Hill High School, V-E Day, V-J Day, War Bond Drives, and Women.

#### Example for gas and oil rationing.

gas and oil	EM_19430521_1, EM_19430722_1, EM_19430824_1, EM19450205_1, EM19450622_1, EM19450816_2 EM19450818_1, EM_19450219_1, SM_19430718_3
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#### To search for the name of a Delaware serviceman.

The letters frequently referred to friends who were in military service. The names of Delaware servicemen are in a separate index which may be accessed by contacting the Preservation Librarian. The 287 citations contain 131 unique names: boys enlisted, shipped out, at home on leave, or where they were stationed. The names of those wounded or killed in action are included in the topic “Casualties” in the Index. The names of four women who were either in the service or with the Red Cross are listed under Women.

**3. Note the citation for the letters.** The reference to the letter, LM\_19441122\_2, contains the name of the author, the date it was written, and the page number. (Lee Minker, November 22, 1944, p.2) There are also references to photos and other items in the online scrapbook.

BM_19450508_1	Bernice Minker, May 8, 1945, p.1 (youngest sister)
EM_19430722_1	Edna Minker, July 22, 1943, p. 1 (mother)
LM_19441122_2	Ralph “Lee” Minker, November 11, 1944, p. 2 (the son and pilot)
RM_19431024_3	Ralph Minker Sr., October 24, 1943, p. 3 (father)
SM_19440305_1	Shirley Minker, March 5, 1944, p. 1 (younger sister)
Scrapbook_36,37	Scrapbook, pages 36 & 37

**4. Go to the Minker Collection Table of Contents** to locate the author of the letter.  
([dehistory.edu/minker-family-letters](http://dehistory.edu/minker-family-letters)) The letters from each person are arranged chronologically.

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**Example.** To locate EM\_19430722, click on **Edna Minker**, then scroll to the appropriate date and click on the underlined date to see the letter. You may download or print the letter.

Date: Wednesday morning, [July 22, ?1943]

Writer: Edna Minker

Recipient: Lee Minker

Place: Wilmington, Delaware

Thieves broke into the Ration Board office in Wilmington over the weekend and stole gas coupons for more than 10,000,000 gal. together with some oil coupons. They broke into a concrete and steel cabinet. So far they have not been found.

The pictures which we took will not be ready until next week, but I'll let you have them as soon as they come. How soon will yours be ready?

Love from everybody.

Mather

#### How to cite the Minker Collection.

When referring to a letter, photo, or other item from the collection in a paper, online, or for publication, please use the following credit: *Courtesy the Delaware Historical Society, Minker Family Collection.*