



Viereck, George Sylvester.

**George Sylvester Viereck letters to Eric and Era Posselt
1941–1962
(bulk dates 1955–1957)**

Abstract: The collection contains letters from George Sylvester Viereck to Eric Posselt and Era Posselt (who was also known as Era Zistel), 1941 to 1959, as well as a few clippings about Viereck dating up to 1962. The bulk of the letters (1955–1957) reflect publishing advice and an on-going personal exchange regarding the health issues of both Viereck and Eric Posselt.

Descriptive Summary

Identification:	MSS 603
Creator:	Viereck, George Sylvester.
Title:	George Sylvester Viereck letters to Eric and Era Posselt
Inclusive Dates:	1941–1962
Bulk Dates:	1955–1957
Extent:	.3 linear feet (35 items)
Language:	Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation:	MSS 603, George Sylvester Viereck letters to Eric and Era Posselt , Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.
Shelving Summary:	Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch)
Location:	Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/
Source:	Purchase, 2009.
Processing:	Processed and encoded by Christopher La Casse, September 2009.
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Biographical Note

George Sylvester Viereck

German-American poet, writer, and propagandist, George Sylvester Viereck, was born December 31, 1884, in Munich, Germany; died March 18, 1962, in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Prior to World War I, Viereck enjoyed some literary fame as a poet. His German heritage became a focal point of his prolific and varied career as a poet, propagandist, interviewer, essayist, playwright, and novelist, and he publicized his pro-German sentiments in a variety of self-run periodicals during World War I and World War II. Viereck maintained that bias due to his political activities prevented publication and fair reception of his work.

After the war, Viereck continued to write: in addition to his journalistic activities for the *Saturday Evening Post* and his work for his own periodical, Viereck published a study of propaganda, *Spreading Germs of Hate* (1930) and *The Strangest Friendship in History: Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House* (1932). Viereck also became known for his interviews with famous contemporaries, many of whom he numbered among his personal friends, including Kaiser Wilhelm II, George Bernard Shaw, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein.

World War II renewed Viereck's propagandistic activities; he wrote and worked for the *German-American Economic Bulletin* and helped found *Today's Challenge* in 1939. Viereck's public defense of Nazism and many of its policies during this period led to his arrest in October 1941 for violation of the 1938 Foreign Agents Registration Act. In 1942, Viereck was convicted and sent to prison, only to be released a year later when the Supreme Court overturned the decision. Yet in 1943, Viereck was again convicted and imprisoned until 1947. His incarceration inspired many poems and a memoir, *Men Into Beasts* (1952).

Viereck maintained that bias due to his political activities prevented publication and fair reception of his work; however, many of his poems were printed in Samuel Roth's *American Aphrodite*.

Viereck's literary pursuits also included plays and novels. With novelist Paul Eldridge, Viereck penned a trilogy of novels based on the theme of the Wandering Jew: *My First Two Thousand Years: The Autobiography of the Wandering Jew* (1929); *Salome, The Wandering Jewess: My First Two Thousand Years of Love* (1930); and *Invincible Adam* (1932). Viereck's other fiction includes *The House of the Vampire* (1907) and *The Nude in the Mirror* (1953). Viereck died March 18, 1962, in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Eric Posselt

Eric Posselt was born in 1892 in the northern mountains of Bohemia. He attended the University of Prague, settled in New York working various jobs in theatre, on Wall Street, and in the publishing field. In 1950, Posselt edited a collection of Christmas stories entitled, *The World's Greatest Christmas Stories*. His work appeared in print in both the United States and Germany.

Era Zistel Posselt

Era Posselt (Zistel) was an author and personal friend of George Sylvester Viereck. She has published work in the *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Sources:

"George Sylvester Viereck," <http://www.anb.org> (accessed September 27, 2006).

Biographical information derived from the collection.

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains letters from George Sylvester Viereck to Eric Posselt and Era Posselt (who was also known as Era Zistel), 1941 to 1959, as well as a few clippings about Viereck dating up to 1962. The bulk of the letters (1955–1957) reflect publishing advice and an on-going personal exchange regarding the health issues of both Viereck and Eric Posselt.

On personal printed letterhead of Hotel Belleclaire, 250 West 77th Street, New York, Viereck wrote several letters inquiring about Eric Posselt's health after a series of strokes. To Era, Posselt's wife, Viereck congratulated her on an acceptance of a story in the *Saturday Evening Post*. For Era, Viereck's letters offered advice on dealing with editors and finding a publisher. He also alluded to his own literary on-goings, including a story published in the May issue of the *American Mercury* under the pseudonym Robert Warick. Frequently tired and unable to find a publisher for his autobiography, Viereck lamented to the couple about the decline of his mental capabilities, an inability to write, his own health issues, which included a stroke and hepatitis, and the struggle to find physical comfort in old age. The few clippings in the collection include Viereck's obituary, which appeared March 21, 1962, in the *New York Times*.

Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Viereck, George Sylvester--Correspondence.

Posselt, Eric 1892- --Correspondence.

Zistel, Era--Correspondence.

Topical Terms

Authors, American--20th century--Correspondence.

Publishers and publishing--History--United States--20th century--Sources.

Form/Genre Terms

Correspondence.

Clippings (information artifacts)

Occupation

Authors.

Personal Contributors

Posselt, Eric 1892-, correspondent.

Zistel, Era, correspondent.

Related Materials in this Repository

MSS 537 Viereck, George Sylvester - John Thomas Head correspondence

Arrangement

The letters are arranged chronologically by date.

Detailed Description of the Collection

George Sylvester Viereck letters to Eric and Era Posselt , 1941–1959

Personal letters discussing writing, publishing, and health issues.

Correspondence , 1941 August–1956 November [F1]

14 items

Correspondence , 1956 December–1959 February [F2]

16 items

Clippings about George Sylvester Viereck , 1955–1962 5 items

Biographical information , 1955 [F3]

Reprint from *Twentieth Century Authors* (H.W. Wilson, 1955).

Biographical information about Eric Posselt , undated [F3]

H. Keith Thompson press release , 1954 [F3]

Press release announcing Viereck's 70th birthday celebration, "approved by GSV."

Statement by Mr. George Sylvester Viereck , 1941 [F3]

The statement, dated October 8, 1941, concerns the author's indictment as he defended his position against the United States aligning with Great Britain.

"George Sylvester Viereck, 77, German-Propagandist, Dies" , 1962 [F3]

New York Times, March 21, 1962.
