

Wallace Haslett Myers papers

1938-1961

7 boxes (3.5 linear ft.)

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Read collection overview

Wallace Haslett Myers was born in Worcester, Massachusetts on November 21, 1929, the elder of two sons of Roscoe and Priscilla Myers. Myers received his Bachelor's Degree from Clark University in Worcester in 1951. He attended Boston University Law School in the summer of 1951, then enrolled in Harvard Law School, and received a law degree in 1954. Of note, he survived a close brush with the Worcester Tornado of 1953, classified as the 21st deadliest tornado in U.S. history. After graduating from law school, he served in the U.S. Army from 1954-1956 and was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon his return from the Army, Myers began practicing law, specializing in probate, taxation and real estate matters. On August 23, 1985, he married Irene Healy in Worcester. He belonged to the Worcester Republican 21 Club, was active in the Episcopal Church, and was a supporter of the church's summer retreat house, Bucksteep Manor in Washington, Massachusetts.

This collection covers the years 1941-1975, with the bulk of the collection between 1945-1957. Myers frequently exchanged letters with many individuals, so the majority is personal correspondence between family and friends, documenting daily life, and notably including one friend's marriage to a Korean woman during the era of the Korean War. Other papers in the collection pertain to his attendance at Clark, Boston University and Harvard, social activities and clubs, and stamp collecting and trading.

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Background on Wallace Haslett Myers

Wallace Myers was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1929 to Roscoe Wallace Myers (1899-1982) and Mildred Priscilla Haslett (1901-1980). Originally from New Hampshire, Roscoe attended Clark University and took up work as an independent ophthalmologist. Priscilla attended college for two years but ultimately chose to stay home and care for her children. Myers had one younger brother, Robert, who was born in 1933.

In 1943 and 1944, at age 15, Myers ran a flower bulb and seed company called Myers Flower Garden out of his parents' home on Old English Road where he supplied flowers to both individuals with whom he corresponded as well as established flower and gardening companies.

He attended Clark University in Worcester, like his father, and obtained his B.A. in Biology in 1951. After graduating from Clark, Myers attended Boston University Law School during the summer and then enrolled in Harvard Law School, where he obtained his J.D. in 1954. He took and passed the Massachusetts Bar Exam in the fall of that year and was admitted into the association. Upon his successful completion of the bar, Myers enlisted in the U.S. Army Infantry 3rd Division and applied to work in the US Army's law firm, the Judge Advocate General Corps in December of 1954. He was stationed at Fort Benning in Georgia until 1956.

Myers returned to Worcester after leaving the army in 1956, where he opened his law practice out of his early childhood home on Elm Street. He specialized in probate, taxation and real estate matters. On August 23, 1985, he married Irene Healy in Worcester. He belonged to the Worcester Republican 21 Club, was active in the Episcopal Church, and was a supporter of the church's summer retreat house, Bucksteep Manor in Washington, Massachusetts, and supported the Worcester Natural History Museum. He lived and worked in Worcester for the rest of his life.

Scope of collection

The Wallace Haslett Myers Papers consists chiefly of letters, which document the life and relationships of a young man from Worcester, Massachusetts growing up in the post-World War II era. The collection includes letters written to Wallace Myers

throughout his childhood and into early adulthood, many from family members, but also from close friends, possible girlfriends, and other acquaintances. Many of the letters were sent to Wallace while he was in the army. Various other documents include records pertaining to his stamp-collecting hobby, college, law school, bar exam, social clubs, car, finances, and various receipts. Additionally, there are newspaper clippings involving Wallace, some documents of a small enterprise he ran out of his parents' house, as well as church and local club membership records.

The bulk of the familial correspondence to Wallace consists of letters from his mother, his brother Bob, and his grandmother Mrs. Wallace P. Myers. Priscilla Haslett Myers (1901-1980), a regular correspondent from 1939-1957, details her family life and health (immediate concerns and extended) and her daily life in Worcester, Massachusetts. Many of her letters date from 1955 when Myers was serving in the army, updating him on the family and the latest gossip. Priscilla's other frequent subjects include Wallace's brother Bob, sister-in-law Janice, nephew Steve, as well as his Aunt Olive and how she was briefly sent to the Brattleboro Retreat (a psychiatric hospital).

Robert "Bob" Myers, Wallace's younger brother (b.1933) wrote quite a few letters (dating from 1943-1956). His letters detail their childhood, updates from camp (some barely legible), shared experiences buying and selling cars, Bob's time as a Private in the Korean War, their education, and Bob's relationship with his eventual wife Janice and the birth of their son, Steve.

A large number of letters (from 1939-1957) come from Myers's grandmother, Mrs. Wallace P. Myers. They detail life at their house with their daughter Olive (Wallace's aunt). She includes newspaper clippings from Worcester, health updates, family news, politics, and the like. Letters contain many illustrations of flowers and birds. One letter comes from Myers's grandfather, Wallace P. Myers M.D. (optometry) from 1939, sending stamps and inquiring about his life. All family members in this time period note sending Myers stamps for his collection.

Among the letters from younger cousin Priscilla Kerwien (dated 1947-1950) are two "puzzle letters" that, when assembled together, contain handwritten letters on the pieces. Priscilla's letters discuss her daily life, playing many instruments, and going to Girl Scout camp. She acknowledges being not much of a speller. She asks Myers questions to get to know him better, and jokes about making up a story that he was her boyfriend when her friends talked about their boyfriends. Cousin Glenn Trask's letters (1949-1952) talks of teaching Myers to dance, how he prefers "the school of life" over Myers's choice of actual school. In explaining Myers's lack of luck with girls, he says that Wallace is the bashful type, but once school is over he will have more time for such things. Finally, the collection includes a handful of letters from an Aunt Charlotte and an Uncle Fred.

Friends from various parts of Wallace Myer's life are well-represented in the collection. Wallace's correspondence from friends are most frequently Fred Chaffee, Wanda Eglin, Phil Chen, and Shirley Seiler.

Fred Chaffee sent dozens of letters from 1951-1956. Chaffee was in the army, and the letters come from various domestic locations, and eventually Korea. He talks about girls, army life, discusses work in the herpetology department at the Worcester Natural History Society, and at the Worcester Telegram. He writes highly of the Korean people and denounces racism, bigotry, and animal suffering. He also writes how Korean women are pleasant, obedient, and defer to their men, unlike American women who are too demanding. He later married a Korean woman. His letters include a pamphlet for joining the NAACP and another on how America is a "white man's country" and not fair to people of color. His letters also include photos and newspaper clippings.

Phil Chen knew Wallace Myers at Clark University. Phil's letters (1950-1956) discuss work on the Atomic Energy Project at Rochester Medical School. He was in the army, stationed in Denmark in 1955, and later worked in the U.S. Public Health Service. He married Inge Rasmussen in 1955, whom he met in Denmark.

Shirley Seiler was a pen pal from 1950-1956; she and Myers met through Fred Chaffee when the boys drove stock cars together. Shirley was 20 when she started writing, living in St. Louis, Missouri. She was involved with Cole Bro. Circus, Shriner's Circus, and Ringling Bros. Circus. She worked at an animal shelter, Bell Telephone, Medark's Restaurant, as an actress (on a Showboat), and vet assistant. She liked to travel and visited Louisiana, New Jersey, Tennessee, Illinois, Colorado, Texas, Wyoming, and Florida. Her letters include many pictures of her in the paper with animals. A progressive woman for the time, she writes about women's roles in the 1950s. She mentions civil rights and seems to be in favor of desegregation. She discusses how men ask her to marry them but she can't see herself as a housewife and wants a career and to travel.

This collection includes a number of documents that fall outside the umbrella of social correspondence. One of the most dramatic episodes in Myers's young adulthood is depicted in a newspaper account of the tornado that swept through Worcester in 1953, and how Wallace survived it. His car, with his mother and two other women inside, was sent hurtling 150 feet and flipped over, landing on the campus of Assumption College. Myers's mother and another passenger sustained non-lethal but serious injuries.

Myers's identity as a stamp collector is shown in his correspondence with Williams Ernest, a stamp dealer and collector from Montreal, from 1948-1956. The most active period of his hobby was 1946, when he communicated with no less than six different people or companies about stamps. This collection also includes the documentations and letters regarding the seed business he ran out of his parent's house in 1943 (Myers Flower Garden Co.).

Also included are a number of documents related to Wallace Myer's higher education. From Clark University, which he attended from 1947-1953 (class of 1951) are letters related to admission and acceptance, class schedules, grades, flyers for meetings and events, a letter welcoming him to Debating Society, letters from the Dean regarding eligibility for Honors Work (April 1949), then placing him on probation (March 1950), his graduation program, and alumni correspondence. His acceptance letter to Boston University School of Law in 1951 is included, as well as various other admission and enrollment documents. The next year he enrolled at Harvard Law School (graduated 1954), and the collection includes his acceptance letter, room selection, class schedule, correspondence with Frank Howard (Wally worked at his law firm during the summers), Harvard rules and regulation pamphlets, student term bills, alumni correspondence, and Dean's office correspondence regarding job leads. Following Harvard, there are documents concerning the Massachusetts Bar Association (1954-1956), including a bar review class, the bar exam itself and notes, swearing in correspondence, congratulatory letters, and an endorsement letter for membership into the American Bar Association.

Myers kept a number of his automobile related records, and represented in the collection (from 1949-1956) are repair receipts, insurance documents, speeding tickets, an order that his license be revoked in 1949 for 7 days, records of an accident, trial preparation, taxes, and registration. Also included are records of Worcester social clubs, including the Worcester Grange, quite a few letters and documents from the Worcester Republican 21 Club, the Worcester Natural History Society, and others. There are documents detailing church activities as well, including from the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, All Saints Church, and Bucksteep.

Inventory

Correspondence

Achenbach, Mary

1939-1956

Box 1: 1

Baggette, Alberta

1955

Box 1: 2

Baker, Lorraine

1949-1952

Box 1: 3

Ball family

1955

Box 1: 4

Barbara and John

1955

Box 1: 5

Bessie

1948

Box 1: 6

Birney, Eileen

1956

Box 1: 7

Bliss, L. M.

1952

Box 1: 8

Bowler, Bill

1955

Box 1: 9

Blackwell, Robert and Mary Ann

1954-1956

Box 1: 10

Boney, Stella

1955-1956

Box 1: 11

Braverman, Joan and Dick

1954

Box 1: 12

Chaffee, Fred

1951-1953
Box 1: 13
Chaffee, Fred
1954-1956
Box 1: 14
Charlotte (Aunt)
undated
Box 1: 15
Chen, Philips, Jr.
1950-1956
Box 1: 16
Churchill, Fraser
1947
Box 1: 17
Cook, Ellen
1954
Box 1: 18
Dickey, Emily and George
1951
Box 1: 19
Englin, Wanda Jean
1948-1949
Box 1: 20
Englin, Wanda Jean
1950
Box 1: 21
Englin, Wanda Jean
1951-1952, undated
Box 2: 1
Ernest, William F.
1948-1956
Box 2: 2
Faly, Lilian
undated
Box 2: 3
Fairbanks, Earl L. and Leona
1949-1955
Box 2: 4
Finch, Stephen W.
1946 Apr-June
Box 2: 5
Finch, Stephen W.
1946 July0Nov
Box 2: 6
Fitzpatrick, Betty
1943
Box 2: 7
Flower, Contstance (Connie)
1955
Box 2: 8
Fortugno, Paul
1946
Box 2: 9
Fred (Uncle)
1944
Box 2: 10
Genny
1954
Box 2: 11

Giblin, Mary E.
1954-1956
Box 2: 12
Grenier, Diane
1947 July
Box 2: 13
Haslett, Cora (Grandma)
1944-1947

Box 2: 14
Haslett, Melba (Mel)
1949-1954
Box 2: 15
Haslett, Melba (Mel)
1955 Jan-Apr
Box 2: 16
Haslett, Melba (Mel)
1955 June-Dec

Box 2: 17
Haslett, Melba (Mel)
1956-1957
Box 2: 18
Hall, William
1946

Box 2: 19
Hinman, Harriet
1943-1947
Box 2: 20
Hinman, Harriet
1943-1948
Box 2: 21

Hodgkins, Emma L. (Aunt Emma)

1939-1949

Box 3: 1
Huffman, Sam Houston
1949-1951

Box 3: 2

Hutter, A. E.

1946

Box 3: 3

Jacobs, James

1946-1947

Box 3: 4

Jacobs, Thomas G. (Uncle Tom)

1955-1956

Box 3: 5

Jensen, Earl G.

1954

Box 3: 6

Jeremy

1949

Box 3: 7

Jinx

undated

Box 3: 8

Johnson, Joan and Dick

1955

Box 3: 9

Jones, Margaret

1954-1955

Box 3: 10

J., Bill

undated

Box 3: 11

Jones, William

1954-1955

Box 3: 12

Kellerman, Barbara

1943

Box 3: 13

Kerwein, Priscella (Cousin)

1947-1950

Box 3: 14

Kerwein, Priscella (Cousin)

1948

Box 3: 15

Puzzle letter.

Kerwein, Priscella (Cousin)

1948

Box 3: 16

Puzzle letter.

King, Charles

undated

Box 3: 17

Knight, D. W.

1946

Box 3: 18

Kugler, Herbert P.

1946

Box 3: 19

Laipson, Samuel

1955-1956

Box 3: 20

LaTulip, Thelma

1941

Box 3: 21

Leavitt, Kenneth

1951-1956

Box 3: 22

Little, Fritz

1954

Box 3: 23

Leana and Earl

1953

Box 3: 24

Locke, Barbara

1948

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Louisine

1944

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Lux, R. R.

1954

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M. E. T.

1950

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Mack, H. M.

undated
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Manny
1951
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Mallets, Cecile G.
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Masters, Annette
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Mellen, Kay
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Box 3: 33
Myers, Janice Unquhart
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Myers, Olive (Aunt)
1938-1956
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Myers, Priscilla Haslett (Mother)
1939-1951
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Myers, Priscilla Haslett (Mother)
1952-1954
Box 4: 2
Myers, Priscilla Haslett (Mother)
1955 Jan-July
Box 4: 3
Myers, Priscilla Haslett (Mother)
1955 Aug-1956
Box 4: 4
Myers, Priscilla Haslett (Mother)
1955-1957
Box 4: 5
Myers, Priscilla Haslett (Mother)
undated
Box 4: 6
Myers, Robert E. (Brother)
1943-1951
Box 4: 7
Myers, Robert (Brother)
1952
Box 4: 8
Myers, Robert E. (Brother)
1953
Box 4: 9
Myers, Robert E. (Brother)
1954
Box 4: 10
Myers, Robert E. (Brother)
1955
Box 4: 11
Myers, Robert E. (Brother)
1956
Box 4: 12
Myers, Robert E. (Brother)
undated
Box 4: 13

Myers, Roscoe (Father)
1952, 1955
Box 4: 14
Myers, Mrs. Wallace P. (Grandmother)
1939-1953
Box 5: 1
Myers, Mrs. Wallace P. (Grandmother)
1955
Box 5: 2
Myers, Mrs. Wallace P. (Grandmother)
1955-1957
Box 5: 3
Myers, Mrs. Wallace P. (Grandmother)
undated
Box 5: 4
Myers, Wallace P. (Grandfather)
1939
Box 5: 5
Norma
1949
Box 5: 6
O'Connell, James
1948-1950
Box 5: 7
Oliver, Sarah
1942
Box 5: 8
Patton, Ann
1955
Box 5: 9
Pendell, Charles
1952-1956
Box 5: 10
Phelps, Charles and Louise
1961
Box 5: 11
Phillips, Miriam F. (Fifield)
1938-1956
Box 5: 12
Preston, Richard Greeley
1948
Box 5: 13
Quinn, John
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Box 5: 14
richard, Helen and Morris
1950-1955
Box 5: 15
Ryan, Jane
1955
Box 5: 16
Sally
1946-1956
Box 5: 17
Sanford, Mrs. H. C.
1948
Box 5: 18
Shaw, Robert
1939

Box 5: 19

Senguin, P.

1952

Box 5: 20

Seiler, Shirley

1950-1951

Box 5: 21

Seiler, Shirley

1952-1953 Aug

Box 6: 1

Seiler, Shirley

1953 Sept-1954

Box 6: 2

Seiler, Shirley

1955-1956

Box 6: 3

Smith, Derek

1946-1950

Box 6: 4

Spindler, H. C.

1956

Box 6: 5

Sturtevant, Julia A.

1949-1952

Box 6: 6

Swanstrom, John E.

1955

Box 6: 7

Tillotson, Arline

1952-1956

Box 6: 8

Trask, Glenn

1949-1952

Box 6: 9

Unidentified correspondence

undated

Box 6: 10

Val

1952

Box 6: 11

Virginia

1948-1950

Box 6: 12

Walter

1955

Box 6: 13

Williamson, Joan

1956

Box 6: 14

Young, Harry

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Youngmen, Betty

undated

Box 6: 16

Zychowski, Chester and Gerry

1954-1956

Box 6: 17

Address book

undated
Box 6: 18
All Saints Church
1944-1955
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Automobile
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Boston University School of Law
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Clark University
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Box 7: 3
Clark University
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Box 7: 4
Diocese of Western Massachusetts
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Box 7: 5
Financial records
1946, 1949
Box 7: 6
Fuller Brush
undated
Box 7: 7
Harvard law School
1951-1953
Box 7: 8
Harvard Law School
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Box 7: 9
Harvard Law School: examinations
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Box 7: 10
Law school
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Massachusetts Bar Association
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Myers Flower Garden and Vendors
1943
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Newspaper clippings
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Box 7: 14
Stamps
1943-1946
Box 7: 15
Stamps
1947-1951
Box 7: 16
Worcester Natural History Society
undated
Box 7: 17

Worcester Republican Club

undated

Box 7: 18

Worcester social clubs

1946-1950

Box 7: 19

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Collection purchased at Brimfield Antique Show in 2016; donated by Danielle Kovacs in 2017.

Processing Information

Processed by Kyle Boyd, Susan Creighton, Jessica Dampier, Emma Gronbeck, Judith Haran, Jennifer Hayner, Jennifer Koch, Kathy Lindbeck, Samuel McAdoo, Jock McDonald, Victoria Palmatier, Raymond Parker, Jessica Ryan, and Amanda Strukus in 2017.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

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Korean War, 1950-1953

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Stamp collectiong

Worcester (Mass.)--History

Contributors

Myers, Wallace Haslett [main entry]

Chaffee, Fred

Chen, Phil

Kerwien, Priscilla

Myers, Priscilla Haslett, 1901-1980

Myers, Robert Haslett, 1933-

Myers, Wallace P.

Myers, Roscoe, 1899-1982

Myers, Wallace Haslett, 1929-

Seiler, Shirley

Genres and formats

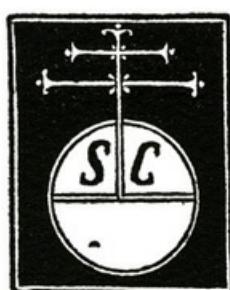
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