

## MSS. Collection #162

**Calvin W. “Moon” Wyrick Papers, 1888-1996 [bulk 1950-1969].  
1 document box (15 folders) and 13 album boxes, ca. 170 items.**

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Calvin W. “Moon” Wyrick Papers consist of scrapbooks and other materials relating to the Greensboro Fire Department and Fire Chief Moon Wyrick. Moon joined the department as a volunteer fireman in the early 1920s and was Fire Chief from 1946 until his retirement in 1969. He was also well-known locally for his philanthropic work and for serving as the city’s “official” Santa Claus for over thirty-five years. Researchers interested in the Greensboro Fire Department, the Oriental Shrine Club, and other aspects of local history will find items of interest in this collection.

**Arrangement:** This collection is arranged into six series by document type. The series are: **Awards**, 1947-1971; **Miscellaneous**, 1888-1996; **Notebook**, ca. 1980; **Photographs**, ca. 1940-1968; **Plaque**, ca. 1945-1946; and **Scrapbooks**, 1932-1986.

**Provenance:** The majority of this collection was donated by David Wyrick in 2000 and assigned accession number 2000.49.2. A 1934 family photograph and the information on Clara Wyrick and Robert R. Wyrick were donated by David Wyrick on November 5, 2003, and assigned accession number 2003.110.1.

**Processing:** This collection was organized by volunteer Kim Lanham, and the finding aid was completed in September 2015.

### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

**Calvin W. Wyrick** (1905-1986) was born in Greensboro to Jennie Welker and Robert R. Wyrick (1867-1944). His siblings included Clara (1891-1909), Bradley, and Frank. As a young boy, he spent so much time at the main fire station near his home that the firefighters adopted him as their mascot and let him tag along to fires. They nicknamed him “Moon” after the fruit-filled fried pies called “half-moons” that he often brought with him. He became a volunteer firefighter in 1922 and received a regular appointment when the Central Station started hiring full-time firemen in 1926.

Moon served in the Fire Department for forty-eight years, including twenty-three (1946-1969) as the Fire Chief. During his tenure, the Greensboro Fire Department grew and underwent many changes, including the additions of a volunteer rescue squad in 1951 and the first African American fire station in 1961, improved training, and the centralization of fire stations

throughout the county. While Fire Chief, Moon served as Second Vice President in the International Fire Chiefs Association, President of the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs, and President of the North Carolina Fireman's Association.

In addition to his role in the Fire Department, Moon was well known for his philanthropic work, particularly on behalf of children. He was instrumental in the building of the Greensboro Polio Hospital and the Cerebral Palsy School, and he served as the city's "official" Santa Claus from the early 1930s to 1969. A member of Carraway Memorial Methodist Church, he also maintained membership with the Scottish Rite Masons, Oasis Shrine, Elks Lodge, Odd Fellows, and Kiwanis. Wyrick married Edna Henson (1908-2002) in 1929, and the couple had three children: F. David, Jennie, and Anne. He died on July 11, 1986 and is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

**Biographical Sources:** The sources used to compile this biographical note include materials in the collection (especially 2:5), Moon Wyrick's obituary (*Greensboro News & Record*, July 12, 1986) and *Greensboro Fire Department, 1926-2001*, edited by C.W. Whitworth (Greensboro, NC: Greensboro Fire Department, 2001).

## **SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE**

The types of materials in this collection include **awards, correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs, a plaque, records, and scrapbooks** covering the 1940s through the 1960s. The majority of material is found in the scrapbooks and concerns the Greensboro Fire Department from 1950 to 1969.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **1. Awards. 1 folder (18 items). 1947-1971.**

This folder consists of awards and commendations given to Moon Wyrick for personal achievements and his work with the fire department. Personal recognitions include a Royal Order of the Jesters, Honorary Citizen of Tennessee, Board of Directors in the Society of Engineers, and several others. His professional achievements include a Resolution for Devoted Service to the City of Greensboro and two firefighter honors from Latin America.

### **2. Miscellaneous. 10 folders (ca. 125 items). 1888-1996.**

This series is composed of correspondence, newspaper clippings, personal effects, and photographs that appear to be remnants from scrapbooks. The material is organized mainly by family member but also includes two folders of obvious loose pages from a scrapbook.

The folder for Moon Wyrick contains clippings and correspondence that cover his work as Santa Claus and his retirement from the Fire Department (2:5). Several folders contain items pertaining or belonging to Wyrick family members, including Calvin's father Robert R. Wyrick (2:10), his uncle C.V. "Sunshine" Wyrick (2:6), his wife Edna (2:8), and his son Frank David (2:9). Of note in his father's materials are items relating to the Odd Fellows and the Order of Red

Men. An apparent member of the Republican Party, Edna “Jack” Wyrick held a position on the Republican Presidential Task Force. The material for Frank David includes a newspaper clipping of him as a toddler, his engagement and wedding announcements, his speech for a dedication in honor of his father in 1996. He also saved two promotional 45 RPM records and a recording of the North Carolina Festival Chorus performing in 1952. A few school items and a small photograph remain as the effects of Moon’s sister Clara (2.7). Amongst the loose scrapbook pages are several family photographs as well as the obituaries of family members (2:3).

**3. Notebook. 1 folder (1 item). ca. 1980.**

This notebook contains the membership roster and bylaws of the Oriental Shrine Club located on High Point Road in Greensboro.

**4. Photographs. 2 folders (6 items). ca. 1940-1968.**

The oversize photographs in this folder relate to the Greensboro Fire Department and the International Fire Chiefs Association banquet. One local photograph shows firemen gathered in front of the Central Station in the 1950s, while the other consists of portraits of all the firemen in 1959. Two photographs of the 1966 banquet for the International Fire Chiefs Association in Boston show fire chiefs and their spouses seated around banquet tables. The miscellaneous folder contains photographs of Carol Martin and the Greensboro Pony League baseball team in 1968.

**5. Plaque. 1 folder (1 item). ca. 1945-1946.**

This folder contains a metal plaque once placed on a fire truck. The plaque lists C.M. Vanstory Jr., Mayor; J.L. Fink, City Manager; several councilmen, and C.W. Wyrick, Fire Chief.

**6. Scrapbooks. 13 album boxes (20 volumes). 1932-1986.**

The scrapbooks contain photographs, newspaper clippings, and correspondence relating to the Greensboro Fire Department, Moon Wyrick, and his charitable works. See the Appendix for an itemized listing of their contents.

Many photographs of fire trucks and stations can be found in most volumes of the scrapbooks (especially Vols. 1-2). A clipping about the groundbreaking for the first African American Fire Station can also be found in the first box (Vol. 1, p. 67). The new volunteer rescue squad and truck feature in the third volume (Vol. 3, p. 11-24). Some of the earliest (ca. 1950) images and information about Moon playing Santa Claus are also located in this volume (Vol. 3, p. 76). Newspaper clippings document some of the larger fires around Greensboro, including those at Lindley Jr. High School (Vol. 4, p. 15-18), an A&T Dormitory (Vo. 4, p. 19), Kinney Shoe Store on S. Elm St. (Vol. 6, p. 22), Graino Feed Mills (Vol. 6, p. 49), and Ralph’s Food Palace (Vol. 7, p. 70).

Groups of correspondence are interspersed throughout the pages of the scrapbooks. Most of the letters provide congratulations upon various accomplishments including his appointments to the positions of Fire Chief (Vol. 2, p. 2-20), President of the N.C. Fireman’s Association (Vol. 5, p. 81), Honorary Chairman of the Greater Greensboro Open (Vol. 9, p. 29), and Second Vice President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (Vol. 12, p. 25). A letter from the

Woolworth's district manager stands out among the Greater Greensboro Open congratulatory letters. This letter, dated February 11, 1960, thanks the Fire Chief and his department for controlling the recent demonstration at the Woolworth store (Vol. 10, p. 29).

Accounts of Wyrick's good works and charitable associations are found throughout these scrapbooks. In particular, several pages are dedicated to Wyrick's involvement with the Cerebral Palsy School in Greensboro (Vol. 8, p. 29). His good works with the Shriners fill the pages of volume 20.

### FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Awards	-- Calvin "Moon" Wyrick
2	1	Miscellaneous	
	2	"	-- 100 Club
	3	"	-- Loose Scrapbook Pages -- Fire Station
	4	"	-- Loose Scrapbook Pages -- Personal
	5	"	-- Wyrick, Calvin "Moon"
	6	"	-- Wyrick, Charles Vaughn "Sunshine"
	7	"	-- Wyrick, Clara
	8	"	-- Wyrick, Edna "Jack"
	9	"	-- Wyrick, Frank David
	10	"	-- Wyrick, Robert
3	1	Notebook	-- Oriental Shrine Club
4	1	Photographs	-- Fire Department and Fire Chiefs
	2	"	-- Miscellaneous
5	1	Plaque	-- Fire Truck Plaque
6	1	Scrapbooks	-- Vol. 1-2
	2	"	-- Vol. 2-3
	3	"	-- Vol. 4-5
	4	"	-- Vol. 5-6
	5	"	-- Vol. 6-7
	6	"	-- Vol. 7-9
	7	"	-- Vol. 9-10
	8	"	-- Vol. 10-12
	9	"	-- Vol. 12-14
	10	"	-- Vol. 14-16
	11	"	-- Vol. 16-17
	12	"	-- Vol. 18-19
	13	"	-- Vol. 19-21