

MSS. Collection #185

Saint Sing Family Papers, ca. 1943-1945. 1 box (11 folders), ca. 53 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

This collection consists of letters written by Clyde and Merl Saint Sing to their parents in Greensboro within a three-year period during World War II. Both men were enlisted in the Navy. Clyde was located primarily stateside and in the Pacific, while Merl was stationed in Europe. A letter from a family friend, William P. Mitchell, is also included.

Arrangement: This collection consists of a single Correspondence series arranged chronologically.

Provenance: Mr. Bob Daniel, a resident of Greensboro, found these letters in the attic of the old Saint Sing house at 1003 Glenwood Ave. in Greensboro. They were brought to the museum on February 7, 1995, and assigned accession number 1995.19.1.

Processing: This collection was organized by volunteer Hannah Smith in February 2011, and the finding aid was prepared by volunteer Cynthia Good in August 2011. The biographical note was updated with information provided by Edwin Saint Sing in March 2017.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Clyde Edwin Saint Sing (1924-) is the elder son of Edwin O'Connell Saint Sing (1891-1977) and Blanche Hawks (1895-1971). Merl Nelson Saint Sing (1925-2005) was the younger son. The Saint Sing family lived at 1003 Glenwood Ave. in Greensboro at the time of this correspondence.

During World War II, Clyde was a gunner on board the USS *Barber* (1:2), a Buckley-class destroyer stationed early in the war along the northeastern Atlantic coast, with some transatlantic escorts, and later in the Pacific. After the war, Clyde worked at WBIG Radio, married Pearl Walker, whom he wrote about in many of his letters, and had one son: Clyde Edwin Saint Sing Jr. (1951-).

Merl served as a radio operator aboard a naval vessel (not named), which was believed to have been a supply ship servicing the troops of Normandy Beach (1:6). He received two battle stars. After the war, Merl married Jane Nixon and they had a daughter: Lora Saint Sing. Merl was a member of the Eastern Star Masonic Lodge and the Glenwood Breakfast Club. He worked for Wrights Clothing Store and Coverts Clothing. He died on November 17, 2005, and is buried in Guilford Memorial Park.

Biographical Sources: The bulk of the biographical information was found in the collection, acquired from Merl Saint Sing's obituary (*News & Record*, November 19, 2005), or obtained from Clyde Saint Sing through his son Edwin. Other dates and names were obtained from a variety of sources, including the Greensboro city directories, the Guilford County Register of Deeds database, findagrave.com, the Greensboro-nc.gov online genealogy report, and Stewart Parrish, a member of the Glenwood Breakfast Club.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

The materials in this collection consist entirely of correspondence, the bulk of which is from Clyde and Merl Saint Sing to their parents during their tours of duty from 1943 to 1945. The young men make remarks about the news they have received from home and rarely mention their military experiences.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

1. Correspondence. 11 folders (53 items). 1943-1945.

These letters are simple with familiar, domestic descriptions of life from a small-town, Southern point-of-view. The young men make remarks about the news they have received from folks back home in Greensboro. They rarely mention their military maneuvers or battles. Instead, they write about their chores (1:2), the movies they have seen (1:3-4; 1:11), their medical problems (1:3; 1:8; 1:11) and the girls they have met (1:4-5; 1:7-8; 1:10).

The men make frequent references to happenings back home, such as a fight at a football game (1:2) and the Moravian Easter Sunrise Service (1:10) in Winston-Salem. They reminisce about their school chums (1:2; 1:4-5; 1:7; 1:11) and working in the family garden (1:3; 1:6; 1:10). They both ask about the family dog, Skippy, and for news of the neighbors. Clyde's shaky relationship with his girlfriend, Pearl Walker, is exhibited throughout his letters home (1:1-9).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Correspondence	-- Mitchell, William P. to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1944, August
	2		-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1943, July – December
	3		-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1944, February – March
	4	Correspondence	-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1944, April
	5		-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1944, May
	6		-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1944, June – July
	7	Correspondence	-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1945, January
	8		-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1945, March
	9		-- Saint Sing, Clyde to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1945, April – July
	10	Correspondence	-- Saint Sing, Merl to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1944, January – April
	11		-- Saint Sing, Merl to Mrs. E.O. Saint Sing, 1944, June – November