

## MSS. Collection #222

### Frank Shaw Family Papers, ca. 1900s-1980. ½ box (9 folders), 43 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 Frank Shaw Family Papers consist of photographs and printed materials relating to Frank D. Shaw, his brother Paul B. Shaw, and the Greensboro Fire Department. Frank Shaw became Greensboro's first paid fire chief in 1926, and Paul Shaw became the first paid assistant fire chief in 1929. The brothers helped bring the department into the modern era with more standardized training and more efficient technology. While the collection holds little biographical information about them, the photos provide insight into the Fire Department's evolution over time.

**Arrangement:** This collection is organized into two series and arranged within series by subject. The series are: **Photographs**, ca. 1900s-ca. 1950; and **Printed Material**, 1923-1980.

**Provenance:** This collection was donated by Cheryl Smith, who inherited the materials from her paternal grandfather, Victor Shaw, and his brothers, Frank D. Shaw and Paul B. Shaw. It was received in 2014 and assigned the accession number 2014.41.1.

**Processing:** This collection was organized by Archivist Elise Allison in early 2015. The finding aid was begun by intern Graeme Roberts in June 2015 and completed by Elise Allison in July 2015.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Born to Ada and Milton Shaw in the Alamance community, Frank Dick Shaw (1887-1946)<sup>1</sup> became a driver for Southside Hose Company on January 1, 1906, and was later promoted to captain. In 1926, he became the first paid chief of the Greensboro Fire Department and served in that position until his death in 1946. Shaw married Nellie C. Phillips in 1922, and he was a member of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association (NCSFA), the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Masonic Lodge, and the First Reformed Church.

His older brother, Paul B. Shaw (1881-1964), served as a firefighter from August 1, 1907, until 1950. He became Greensboro's first paid assistant fire chief in 1929 and was the first recipient of funds from the Greensboro Firemen's Supplementary Retirement Fund in 1954. Paul Shaw was a member of the NCSFA and the North Carolina Fraternal Insurance Association.

---

<sup>1</sup> Frank Shaw's initial obituary in the *Greensboro Daily News* states that he was born on October 13, 1882, and was 63 when he died in 1946. However, a subsequent article about him and [his gravestone](#) show that he was born in 1887. Census records and his death certificate confirm this birth year.

**Biographical Sources:** The sources used to compile this biographical note include the Guilford County Register of Deeds database, the U.S. Census, [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com), Frank Shaw's obituary (*Greensboro Daily News*, August 14, 1946), and Paul Shaw's obituary (*Greensboro Daily News*, March 29, 1964). Additional information was obtained from [\*Greensboro Fire Department, 1808-1984\*](#), edited by B.C. Cox (Greensboro, NC: The Dept., 1984?), and [\*Greensboro Fire Department, 1926-2001\*](#), edited by C.W. Whitworth (Greensboro, NC: Greensboro Fire Department, 2001).

## **SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE**

The types of material included in this collection are photographs and printed material.

The majority of the collection consists of photographs of Frank Shaw (1:4), Paul Shaw (1:5), Greensboro fire stations, and fire equipment. Included are photos of horse-drawn vehicles, particularly from the Southside Hose Company (1:6), and images of the early motorized fire engines (1:1). Also of interest are a photo of the First Reformed Church (1:2) and a postcard of a boarding house run by John and Lula Short (1:3).

The printed material consists largely of newspaper clippings that provide insight into the later years of both Shaw brothers. One article presents anecdotes related by Frank Shaw about his experiences as a fireman from an interview given during his 35<sup>th</sup> year of service (2:2). Another clipping shows Paul Shaw's acceptance of the first funds from the Greensboro Firemen's Supplementary Retirement Fund (2:2).

Few materials will inform researchers about the personal lives of the Shaw brothers. Instead, the strength of the collection is its photographs of the Greensboro Fire Department and firemen, which provide insight into the history of the department and the leadership of the Shaw brothers.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **1. Photographs. 6 folders (30 items). ca. 1900s-ca. 1950.**

This series contains photos of Frank Shaw during his years as fire chief (1:4), Paul Shaw (1:5), Greensboro fire stations, and fire equipment. Multiple photos show horse-drawn vehicles from the Southside Hose Company (1:6) on Asheboro Street, later Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. One photo features firemen standing around engines bedecked in American flags, perhaps for 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities (1:2). A panorama shows the Central Fire Station on North Greene Street with fire engines parked from end to end (1:1). Also of interest is a photo of a group gathered in front of the First Reformed Church on West Lee Street (later West Gate City Boulevard; 1:2). A photographic postcard features people in front of a boarding house run by John and Lula Short at 218 East Washington Street (1:3).

### **2. Printed Material. 3 folders (13 items). 1923-1980.**

The printed material consists primarily of newspaper clippings about the Shaw brothers, as well as Frank Shaw's successor, Chief Calvin W. "Moon" Wyrick (2:2). One article recounts an interview with Frank Shaw in which he recalls some of his experiences as a fireman (2:2). Others

mark when Paul Shaw became the first firefighter to receive funds from the Greensboro Firemen's Supplementary Retirement Fund and discuss the possibility of demolishing the Southside Hose Company, or Old Station No. 4, for a new road (2:2). The miscellaneous folder contains a blank voting ballot from 1929, part of a program from a meeting of the NCSFA, and a program from the 1931 centennial of the Brick Reformed Church in Whitsett (2:1).

### FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	1	Photographs	-- Fire Department (ca. 1900s-1930s)
	2	"	-- First Reformed Church (ca. 1919)
	3	"	-- Miscellaneous (ca. 1900s-ca. 1950)
	4	"	-- Shaw, Frank D. (ca. 1910s-1930s)
	5	"	-- Shaw, Paul B. (ca. 1930s-1950)
	6	"	-- Southside Hose Company (ca. 1900s)
2	1	Printed Material	-- Miscellaneous (1927-1931)
	2	"	-- Newspaper Clippings -- Fire Department (1937-1980)
	3	"	-- Newspaper Clippings -- Miscellaneous (1923-1975)

### Index to the Frank Shaw Family Papers (ca. 1900s-1980)

Note: the numbers following the name/subject entry – e.g. 1:1 – indicate in which Series#:Folder# that name/topic can be found.

**Brick** Reformed Church (Whitsett): 2:1

**Central** Fire Station: 1:1, 1:5, 2:2

**First** Reformed Church: 1:2

**Greensboro** Firemen's Supplementary Retirement Fund: 2:2

**Shaw**, Frank D.: 1:1, 1:3, 1:4, 2:2

Shaw, Paul B.: 1:1, 1:5, 2:2

Short Boarding House: 1:3

Southside Hose Company: 1:6, 2:2

**Wyrick**, Calvin W. "Moon": 2:2