

## MSS. Collection #114

**William L. Trotter Jr. Family Papers, 1889-1995 [bulk ca. 1943-1971].  
3½ boxes (114 folders), ca. 510 items.**

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

### **INTRODUCTION**

This collection consists primarily of correspondence and printed materials pertaining to the military service and political career of William L. Trotter Jr. He served in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II and on the Greensboro City Council during the 1960s, including one term as mayor. The collection contains extensive correspondence from his military and political careers, as well as some newspaper articles, programs, and pamphlets. The financial and legal documents relate mainly to his parents and include a deed to historic Dunleath, which William L. Trotter Sr. purchased in 1917. Researchers interested in Dunleath, the lives of soldiers during World War II, or the Greensboro City Council during the 1960s may find materials of use in this collection.

**Arrangement:** This collection is organized into eight series by document type and/or subject. The series are: **Correspondence**, 1942-1945; **Financial**, 1900-1944; **Legal**, 1889-1917; **Miscellaneous**, ca. 1943-1965; **Photographs**, 1955-1971; **Political**, 1959-1971; **Printed Material**, 1940-1995; and **World War II**, ca. 1943-1945.

**Provenance:** This collection was donated by Sallie Trotter's nephew, Robert B. Dixon, in May 1994 and assigned the accession number 1994.25.1.

**Processing:** This collection was organized and the finding aid was begun by Assistant Archivist Elise Allison in late 2006. The finding aid was completed by intern Savannah Edwards in June 2019.

### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Born in Greensboro, William Lee Trotter Sr. (1869-1940) was the son of Clementine and William D. Trotter. He married Leta Smitherman (1884-1968), and the couple had four children: Jennie Teresa, William Lee Jr., Jack, and Mary. Trotter was a traveling salesman for Watkins-Cottrell Hardware, and he later organized and became president of Southside Hardware Company at 523 S. Elm Street. In 1917, the family purchased historic Dunleath<sup>1</sup> from its Dick family heirs. Dunleath, located at 677 Chestnut Street, was built by Judge Robert P. Dick in the 1850s. After Sherman's troops seized Greensboro during the Civil War, the house served as the

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<sup>1</sup> It appears that Dunleath was the original spelling, but it was spelled Dunleith for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

headquarters for Union General Jacob D. Cox. Trotter's widow sold the house in 1957, and it was demolished in 1969.

William Lee Trotter Jr. (1909-1980), known as Bill, married Sallie Gilmore (1908-1994) of Columbia, SC, and the couple had no children. During World War II, Bill Trotter was a private and then a corporal in the U.S. Army Air Forces, serving for two years in England. After returning home, he worked as the president of Southside Hardware Company. He was a member of the Greensboro City Council from 1959 to 1971 and mayor from 1965 to 1967. Early in his political career, Trotter was involved in civil rights issues and advocated for the development of a human relations commission for black Greensboro business owners. As mayor, he actively supported the development of business owners in the southern part of Greensboro, and eventually the William L. Trotter Jr. Recreation Center was named after him. While on the Greensboro City Council, Trotter also served as president of the Greensboro Merchants Association and director of the Chamber of Commerce. He did not run for reelection in 1971, but he remained president of Southside Hardware Company until his death.

**Biographical Sources:** The sources used to compile this biographical note include materials in the collection, the Guilford County Register of Deeds database, [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), the obituary of William L. Trotter Sr. (*Greensboro Daily News*, April 13, 1940), and the obituary of William L. Trotter Jr. (*Greensboro Record*, August 4, 1980).

## **SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE**

The types of materials in this collection include correspondence, legal and financial documents, photographs, artwork, newspaper clippings, and other printed materials pertaining to the lives of William L. Trotter Jr. and his family. Most of the collection focuses on Trotter's military service during World War II and his political career on the Greensboro City Council. The bulk of the materials are letters from William L. Trotter Jr. to his wife Sallie, letters from local businesspeople in support of Trotter's campaigns, and newspaper clippings about Trotter's mayoral duties. Researchers interested in Dunleath, the Greensboro City Council, or Greensboro businesses during the 1960s may find this collection useful. In addition, the collection may be of interest to researchers studying the lives of soldiers during World War II.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

### **1. Correspondence. 44 folders (ca. 335 items). 1942-1945.**

The correspondence consists primarily of letters from William L. Trotter Jr. to his wife Sallie during World War II (1:17-44). After he joined the U.S. Army Air Forces and while he was still in the United States, Trotter's letters detail his military training (1:17-19). His letters from England generally focus on news of family and friends with little information about the war itself, although he occasionally discusses his leisure activities (1:20-40). After World War II, Trotter was stationed in Mississippi, and his letters from this period mention his leisure activities and the process of being discharged from the military (1:41-43). The series also contains letters to Sallie Trotter from her siblings (1:1-7), particularly Marion L. "Pete" Gilmore, who served as

a lieutenant during World War II. Only a few letters are addressed to William L. Trotter Jr. from his friends (1:10,11,14).

**2. Financial. 4 folders (12 items). 1900-1944.**

This series contains miscellaneous financial papers from both generations of the Trotter family. Several bills, receipts, and tax returns are made out to William L. Trotter Jr. and his wife Sallie (2:1). The remaining items, which relate to William L. Trotter Sr., include a Hardware Mutual Fire Insurance Company policy for a grocery store and dwelling at 513 S. Elm Street (2:2), and several North Carolina Bank and Trust Co. promissory notes (2:3).

**3. Legal. 7 folders (10 items). 1889-1917.**

The legal documents pertain only to William L. Trotter Sr. Of particular interest are two deeds (3:1-2) to Dunleath, originally built for Judge Robert P. Dick in the 1850s and sold by members of his family to Trotter in 1917. Two other deeds (3:4-5) record the transfer of the Piedmont Springs Company's Lot No. 5 in Stokes County, first from the company to stockholder S.B. Taylor and later from S.B. Taylor to Trotter. In a 1910 lease agreement, Trotter served as an agent for the Sequoia Fishing Club to rent fishing rights to a mill pond located on land owned by William Hodgkin (3:6).

**4. Miscellaneous. 5 folders (12 items). ca. 1943-1965.**

The miscellaneous series consists primarily of scrapbook pages with photographs, clippings, and other memorabilia relating to William L. Trotter Jr.'s service in World War II and his years as mayor of Greensboro. Individual items of interest include the minutes of the City Council meeting at which Trotter was nominated and elected mayor (4:3), and a copy of a newspaper article about Sallie Trotter's life as the mayor's wife (4:4). The series also contains an undated architectural rendering of the William L. Trotter Jr. Community Center (4:1).

**5. Photographs. 9 folders (20 items). 1955-1971.**

Most of the photographs relate to William L. Trotter Jr.'s political career. They include images of the Greensboro City Council (5:3-4) and events such as the 1961 opening of Fire Station No. 4, the first station in Greensboro to hire African American firefighters (5:5). In other images, Trotter is pictured with Richardson Preyer (5:9) and Fire Chief "Moon" Wyrick (5:5). Exceptions to the political theme are an unidentified classroom scene (5:2) and a 50th anniversary image of Hardware Association of the Carolinas board members (5:7).

**6. Political. 35 folders (ca. 90 items). 1959-1971.**

The political series consists primarily of correspondence and newspaper articles relating to William L. Trotter Jr.'s political career. Local business owners sent letters of support for his campaigns (6:3-7), and prominent supporters offered congratulations upon his electoral victory (6:9-19, 21-23). Some supporters also provided suggestions about ways to improve Greensboro. For example, McNeill Smith of Smith, Moore, Schell & Hunter, Attorneys and Counsellors at

Law, suggested a location for the new city hall (6:19). The series also contains pamphlets and newspaper clippings that detail Trotter's stances on political issues and his personal life as a member of the Greensboro City Council (6:24-29), as well as programs from events at which Trotter spoke throughout the city (6:30-35).

### **7. Printed Material. 3 folders (6 items). 1940-1995.**

This series contains miscellaneous printed material. Of particular interest is a copy of an October 1957 newspaper article about Dunleath (7:2). The article examines Dunleath's history from its construction for the Dick family to its transfer to the Trotters and sale by Mrs. W.L. Trotter Sr. It also describes some of the antique furniture that Mrs. Trotter acquired for her home and shows photos of several rooms.

### **8. World War II. 7 folders (ca. 25 items). ca. 1943-1945.**

The World War II series consists primarily of pamphlets and other printed material relating to William L. Trotter Jr.'s military service. Many of the pamphlets provide information about the duties of members of the U.S. Army Air Forces (8:3), while the notices and orders issued to Trotter by the government include a notice for an upcoming physical (8:6). A highlight of the series is a church bulletin from West Market Street Methodist Church that lists Trotter as one of the members serving during World War II (8:1). Some materials are items that Trotter collected during his military service, such as playing cards and drawings from his friends (8:4). Like her husband, Sallie Trotter also saved items from her time in Greensboro and Washington D.C. during World War II (8:7).

## **FOLDER LISTING**

<b><u>Series</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Contents</u></b>
1	1	Correspondence -- Dixon, Mary to her sister, Sallie Trotter (1944, July)
	2	" -- Gilmore, Harry (1944, May and n.d.)
	3	" -- Gilmore, Lonnie to his sister, Sallie Trotter (1943)
	4	" -- Gilmore, Marion L. "Pete" and Margaret (1942-1943)
	5	" -- Gilmore, Marion L. "Pete" and Margaret (1944)
	6	" -- Gilmore, Marion L. "Pete" (1945)
	7	" -- Gilmore, Marion L. "Pete" and Margaret (n.d.)
	8	" -- Greeting cards
	9	" -- Hall, M.B. to Sallie Trotter (1944, August)
	10	" -- Jackson, Mrs. F.R. to Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Trotter Jr. (1945, July)
	11	" -- Kleier, Bernard R. to W.L. Trotter Jr. (1944, July)
	12	" -- Miscellaneous (1942-1945)
	13	" -- Myers, R.B. to "Miss Sally Elliot" (1942, November)
	14	" -- Reddick(?), Jack to W.L. Trotter Jr. (1944-1945)

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
	15	Correspondence -- Schweigert, Esther N. to Sallie Trotter (1944, July)
	16	“ -- Spencer, Davis G. to his aunt, Sallie Trotter (1944)
	17	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter -- (1943, July - August)
	18	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1943, September - October 11)
	19	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1943, October 18 - November 19)
	20	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1943, November 20 - December)
	21	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, January - April 16)
	22	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, April 18 - May 6)
	23	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, May 10 - June 20)
	24	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, June 21-30)
	25	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, July 1-19)
	26	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, July 20-31)
	27	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, August 1-14)
	28	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, August 15-31)
	29	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, September 1-27)
	30	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, September 18-30)
	31	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, October 1-19)
	32	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, October 20 - November 10)
	33	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, November 11-30)
	34	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, December 1-14)
	35	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1944, December 15-31)
	36	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, January 1-24)
	37	“ -- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, January 25 - February)

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
1	38	Correspondence	-- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, March 1-20)
	39	"	-- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, March 25 - April 24)
	40	"	-- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, April 28 - July)
	41	"	-- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, August 1-13)
	42	"	-- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, August 14-25)
	43	"	-- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (1945, August 26 - September 5)
	44	"	-- Trotter, W.L. Jr. to his wife, Sallie Trotter (n.d.)
2	1	Financial	-- Bills, receipts, and tax returns (1943-1944)
	2	"	-- Fire insurance policy (1926)
	3	"	-- Promissory notes -- North Carolina Bank and Trust Co. (1931-1933)
	4	"	-- Stock Certificates -- Cude, Charles S. for Crutchfield Hardware Co. (1900)
3	1	Legal	-- Deed -- Dunleath -- Cox, C.C. to W.L. Trotter (1917)
	2	"	-- Deed -- Dunleath -- Williams, Wm. Leigh et al. to W.L. Trotter (1917)
	3	"	-- Deed -- Michaux, J.L. and S.M. to W.L. Trotter (1892)
	4	"	-- Deed -- The Piedmont Springs Company to S. B. Taylor (1889-1890)
	5	"	-- Deed -- Taylor, S.B. to W.L. Trotter (1900)
3	6	Legal	-- Lease -- Hodgin, William to W.L. Trotter, agent of Sequoia Fishing Club (1910)
	7	"	-- Miscellaneous (1905-1906)
4	1	Miscellaneous	-- Architectural rendering
	2	"	-- Scrapbook pages -- City Council (ca. 1964)
	3	"	-- Scrapbook pages -- City Council (ca. 1965)
	4	"	-- Scrapbook pages -- Trotter, Sallie (1965)
	5	"	-- Scrapbook pages -- World War II (ca. 1943-1945)
5	1	Photographs	-- Bryan Park Dedication (1971)
	2	"	-- Classroom scene (n.d.)
	3	"	-- Greensboro City Council (ca. 1960)
	4	"	-- Greensboro City Council (ca. 1961-1965)
	5	"	-- Greensboro Fire Dept. (ca. 1960s) *Opening of Fire Station No. 4 (1961)
	6	"	-- Greensboro-Montebeliard affiliation events (1964)
	7	"	-- Hardware Association of the Carolinas -- Board members (1955)

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
5	8	Photographs -- Miscellaneous (ca. 1960s)
	9	“ -- Preyer, Richardson with W.L. Trotter Jr. and others (n.d.)
6	1	Political -- Campaign materials (1959)
	2	“ -- Coliseum Expansion and Exhibit Building (1969)
	3	“ -- Correspondence -- Bailey, Herbert G., VP, Bank of Greensboro (1959)
	4	“ -- Correspondence -- Beerman, William L. Jr., Burlington Industries (1969)
	5	“ -- Correspondence -- Bowles, Chas. P. (n.d.)
	6	“ -- Correspondence -- Bridges, Paul F., Bridges Furniture (1959)
	7	“ -- Correspondence -- Campaign for City Council (1959)
	8	“ -- Correspondence -- City Beautiful Committee (1965)
	9	“ -- Correspondence -- Collins, Major C.R., The Salvation Army (1959)
	10	“ -- Correspondence -- Frye, Henry E. (1969)
	11	“ -- Correspondence -- Madison, J. Clay, Minister, West Market Street Methodist Church (1969)
	12	“ -- Correspondence -- McLeod, Ann to Mrs. W.L. Trotter Jr. (1966)
	13	“ -- Correspondence -- Myers, Charles F., Burlington Industries (1969)
	14	“ -- Correspondence -- Pate, John R., President, Civitan International (1965)
	15	“ -- Correspondence -- Preyer, L. Richardson (1964-1971)
	16	“ -- Correspondence -- Schenck, David (1965)
	17	“ -- Correspondence -- Schiffman, Tony to Mrs. W.L. Trotter Jr. (1965)
	18	“ -- Correspondence -- Smith, Lucy (1965)
	19	“ -- Correspondence -- Smith, McNeill, Attorney (1965, 1969)
	20	“ -- Correspondence -- Tate, Mrs. S.E. Jr., League of Women Voters (1959)
	21	“ -- Correspondence -- Thompson, J.W., Chairman, Thompson-Arthur Paving Co. (1969)
	22	“ -- Correspondence -- Turner, Thomas, Attorney (1969)
	23	“ -- Correspondence -- Winston, Pat (1969)
	24	“ -- <i>Greensboro Business</i> (1965)
	25	“ -- Miscellaneous
	26	“ -- Newspaper clippings (1959, 1963)
	27	“ -- Newspaper clippings (1965)
	28	“ -- Newspaper clippings (1966-1967)

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	
6	29	Political	-- Newspaper clippings (n.d.)
	30	"	-- Programs -- A&T College Memorial Union Building Groundbreaking (1965)
	31	"	-- Programs -- Greensboro Jaycees (1966)
	32	"	-- Programs -- Greensboro Merchants' Association (1965-1966)
	33	"	-- Programs -- Greensboro Public Library (1964)
	34	"	-- Programs -- July 4th Celebration (1965)
	35	"	-- Programs -- Parks and Recreation (1965)
7	1	Printed Material	-- Calendar -- Southside Hardware Co. (1995)
	2	"	-- Dunleath -- <i>Greensboro Daily News</i> , Oct. 20, 1957 (copy)
	3	"	-- Miscellaneous (1940)
8	1	World War II	-- Church bulletin -- West Market Street Methodist Church (1943)
	2	"	-- Civil Service Employees' Manual (n.d.)
	3	"	-- Military pamphlets (1945)
	4	"	-- Miscellaneous (ca. 1943-1945)
	5	"	-- Newspaper clippings (1945)
	6	"	-- Notices, memos, and orders (1943-1945)
	7	"	-- Trotter, Sallie -- Ration book, ID card, and other papers (ca. 1943-1945)

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**Bailey, Herbert G.:** 6:3 (1959)

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Beerman, William L.: 6:4 (1969)

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Bowles, Chas. P.: 6:5 (n.d)

Bridges Furniture: 6:6 (1959)

Bridges, Paul F.: 6:6 (1959)

Bryan Park: 5:1 (1971)

Burch, Hazel N.: 5:3 (ca. 1960)

Burlington Industries: 6:4 (1969); 6:13 (1969)

**City Beautiful Committee:** 6:8 (1965)

Civitan International: 6:14 (1965)



Collins, Major C.R.: 6:9 (1959)  
Cox, C.C.: 3:1 (1917)  
Crutchfield Hardware Co.: 2:4 (1900)  
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**Dick** family: 3:1-2 (1917)  
Dixon, Mary: 1:1 (1944)  
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**Elam**, Jack: 5:3 (ca. 1960)

**Falkener**, Waldo C., Sr.: 5:3 (1960)  
Frye, Henry E.: 6:10 (1969)

**Gilmore**, Harry: 1:2 (1944)  
Gilmore, Lonnie: 1:3 (1943)  
Gilmore, Marion L. "Pete": 1:4-7 (1942-1945)  
Gilmore, Margaret: 1:4-5 (1942-1944); 1:7 (n.d.)  
*Greensboro Business*: 6:24 (1965)  
Greensboro City Council: 4:2-3 (ca. 1964-1965); 5:3-4 (ca. 1960-1965); 5:6 (1964)  
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Greensboro Jaycees: 6:31 (1966)  
Greensboro Merchants' Association: 6:32 (1965-1966)  
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**Hall**, M.B.: 1:9 (1944)  
Hardware Association of the Carolinas: 5:7 (1955)  
Hodgin, William: 3:6 (1910)

**Jackson**, Mrs. F.R.: 1:10 (1945)  
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Lewis, Elbert F.: 5:3 (ca. 1960); 6:1 (1959)

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Myers, Charles F.: 6:13 (1969)  
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**North** Carolina Bank and Trust Co.: 2:3 (1931-1933)

**Overseas** Replacement Depot: 8:4 (1945)

**Parks** and Recreation: 6:35 (1965)

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Piedmont Springs Company: 3:4-5 (1889-1900)

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**Reddick**, Jack: 1:14 (1944-1945)

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**Salvation** Army: 6:9 (1959)

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Schweigert, Esther N.: 1:15 (1944)

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Smith, McNeill: 6:19 (1965, 1969)

Southside Hardware Co.: 7:1 (1995)

Spencer, Davis G.: 1:16 (1944)

**Tate**, Mrs. S.E. Jr.: 6:20 (1959)

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Wyrick, Calvin "Moon": 5:5 (ca. 1960s)

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