

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION RECORD

RG2031.AM: Palmer, Arthur L., 1888-1974 and Palmer, Harry O., 1886-1951

Papers: 1873-1963

Omaha, Neb.: Lawyers

Size: 5.5 cu. ft.

BACKGROUND NOTE

Harry O. and Arthur L. Palmer, sons of Emil Palmer and Alma Peterson palmer, were prominent Omaha lawyers, active in civic and fraternal organizations. Both brothers were born in Louisville, Nebraska; Harry on June 10, 1886 and Arthur in 1888. Both attended public school in Louisville.

Harry entered Nebraska Wesleyan University and upon graduating in 1908, entered Harvard Law School where he edited the Harvard Law Review for two years. Arthur received his undergraduate training at the University of Nebraska. After graduating in 1910 he too entered Harvard Law School.

After graduating from Harvard in 1912 and 1913 respectively, Harry and Arthur went into practice in Omaha as Palmer and Palmer. Among their more notable clients were the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City in Nebraska and the Royal Swedish Vice Consulate at Omaha. Harry acted as Educational Director of the American Institute of banking and from 1912-1925 lectured on law at Omaha University.

In 1917 Harry enlisted as a private in the army and eventually rose to the rank of major. He was an assistant executive officer in the office of Judge Advocate General of the Army and served as Judge Advocate of American Expeditionary Forces of Siberia and China.

Harry Palmer was active in politics and served as a delegate to the Republican Party's state convention on several occasions. He was a manager of John L. Kennedy's unsuccessful campaign for U.S. senator. In 1928 he was a candidate for governor of Nebraska and in 1936 he ran for the U.S. Senate. Both of these campaigns, as well as his candidacy for Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court in 1932 and again in 1938, were unsuccessful.

Harry took an active interest in government and world affairs. On July 11, 1930, he wrote a well-publicized letter to President Paul von Hindenburg of the German Republic suggesting a "friendship-invasion" of American ex-service men as a means to prevent war. He once said to himself, "I am a conservative without apologies or regrets.....Don't have anything in common with political liberals (self styled) and prefer old Republic to modern democratic trends."

Both Arthur and Harry retired from their law practice and took up residence in Long Beach California, making frequent return visits to Nebraska.

After Harry's death on September 27, 1951, Arthur Palmer began to compile much of his brother's correspondence and papers for the Nebraska State Historical Society. He corresponded regularly with the Society until 1963. Arthur Palmer died in 1974.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of eleven boxes of manuscript material and two scrapbooks arranged in ten series: 1) General Correspondence, 1910-1963; 2) Diaries of Arthur and Harry Palmer, 1907-1910; 3) Speeches and Articles by Arthur and Harry Palmer, 1918 and undated; 4) Certificates, 1881-1959; 5) Printed Material, Arthur and Harry Palmer, 1909-1969; 6) Military Service Records of Harry Palmer, 1917-1942; 7) Political Clippings of Harry Palmer, 1928-1938; 8) Personal Clippings, 1917-1961; 9) Cartoons, undated; and 10) Miscellaneous Material, 1873-1961.

The collection relates to the careers of Harry Palmer and his brother Arthur. The bulk of the collection consists of miscellaneous correspondence usually bound together in small packets and accompanied by a note of explanation listing the letters included in the group and comments on some aspect of Harry Palmer's life. These notes were written by Arthur Palmer. A number of the letters are related to Palmer's dismay at the liberalism of the faculty at Harvard and his belief in the threat of communist infiltrators within the University system. Much of the correspondence, however, is of purely personal nature - letters to and from his mother concerning his life and mutual friends and acquaintances.

The diaries of Arthur and Harry Palmer concern their experiences at their respective Undergraduate Universities. The speeches and articles of the Palmer brothers range from short fiction to patriotic and commencement addresses. Still another series contains certificates of the Palmer family ranging from citizen papers of Emil Fredrik Gustafsson (Palmer) to Nebraska State Navy Certificates.

The series containing printed material is primarily made up of programs, booklets, and magazines of the civic and fraternal organizations to which the brothers belonged.

Another series contains material pertaining to Harry Palmer's life in the military service. Correspondence, a diary kept on the Sino-Siberian Expedition (1918-1921), records from his service in the office of Judge Advocate General, and letters and articles connected with his letter to President Paul von Hindenburg suggesting a "Friendship-Invasion" of Germany are included in this series.

The two series of clippings constitute a major portion of the collection. They deal with both the political career of Harry Palmer and with the personal lives of the Palmer brothers, their mother, Mrs. Alma Palmer, and their relatives, friends, and acquaintances. Clippings of Harry's political campaigns, his interest in snakes, Arthur and Harry's activities in the American Legion and the Masons as well as the obituaries of Harry Palmer and Mrs. Alma Palmer are included. Also in this series are the two scrapbooks covering the political, academic, social and organizational lives of the Palmer brothers.

The collection also includes original cartoons about Harry and Arthur Palmer that appeared in print as well as a picture of Harry drawn by a student during his undergraduate career at Nebraska Wesleyan.

The final series, Miscellany, includes stories by Mrs. Alma Palmer, land titles from Palmer land, organization membership cards and a list of the contents of Harry Palmer's Army foot locker given to NSHS by Arthur Palmer.

DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1910-1963

Box 1

F1 1910-1930
F2 1930-1938
F3 1939
F4 1940-1942 (stapled together)
F5 1941
F6 1942
F7 1943
F8 1945-1951 (stapled together)
F9 1945
F10 1947
F11 1949
F12 1950
F13 1951
F14 1952

Box 2

F15 1952
F16 1953
F17 1954
F18 1955

Box 3

F19 1955
F20 1956
F21 1957

Box 4

F22 1957
F23 1958
F24 1958

Box 5

F25 1959
F26 1959
F27 1959
F28 1960

Box 6

F29 1960
F30 1961
F31 1962
F32 1962
F33 1963

SERIES 2: DIARIES OF ARTHUR AND HARRY PALMER, 1907-1910

Box 7

F1 Diary of Arthur Palmer, 1907
F2 Diaries of Harry Palmer, 1907-1910

SERIES 3: SPEECHES AND ARTICLES BY HARRY AND ARTHUR PALMER, 1918, n.d.

Box 8

F1 1918 and undated

SERIES 4: CERTIFICATES, 1881-1959

Box 7

F1 Fraternity, college, legal, political and marriage certificates, citizenship papers, 1881-1918
Item 1 Legal papers, Nebraska State Navy certificates, diplomas from Nebraska Wesleyan and the University of Nebraska, 1908-1959 (shelved in oversize)

SERIES 5: PRINTED MATERIAL, 1908-1963

Box 7

F1 Noon Day Club Banquet programs, 1917, 1920, 1923-1928
F2 Unitarian Laymen's League--pamphlets, membership certificate, pamphlet by Arthur L. Palmer entitled "A Sagebrush Sermon" 1921-1923
F3 Orpheus Chorus and "Get Acquainted Club" program, pamphlet by Arthur L. Palmer, song book, most undated, 1926

Box 8

F4 Mason's--books, pamphlets, certificates, programs, 1909-1963
F5 Camp Hale--program, information, map, pamphlets, postcards, banquet program, letters, annual report, 1909-1914, 1921-1922, 1961 flyer-camp reunion

- F6 Greeks--music clippings, handbill, correspondence, 1928-1940
- F7 Harvard Law School--booklets, magazines, Nebraska alumni addresses, certificates, 1910-1958

Box 9

- F8 Aviation--letters, log, clippings, 1929-1935
- F9 Miscellaneous printed material--Union Pacific Magazine, Harbor Highlights, Wings, Dan Smoot Report, Swedish and Spanish publications, 1925-1959

SERIES 6: MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS OF HARRY O. PALMER, 1917-1942

Box 9

- F1 Military record, 1917-1919; correspondence up to entering army in 1918
- F2 War Savings File--Executive Secretary of United States War Savings for Nebraska, 1917-1918
- F3 Judge Advocate--records of Sino-Siberian Expedition 1918-1921, autobiographies of enlisted detachment of Judge Advocate General's office
- F4 Diary of Major Palmer, Judge Advocate on Sino-Siberian Expedition, 1919-1942
- F5 Stories, verse, clippings concerning Sino-Siberian Expedition, 1919-1942

Box 10

- F6 Articles and correspondence concerning suggested "Friendship-Invasion" to avert World War II, letter to President Paul von Hindenburg of the German Republic, 1930-1934
- F7 Miscellaneous--Japanese maps, Draft Board classification card, souvenirs from trip to China and Siberia, 1917-1919

SERIES 7: POLITICAL CLIPPINGS OF HARRY O. PALMER, 1928-1938

Box 10

- F1 County Chairman, Republican Party, 1928
- F2 Gubernatorial Candidate, 1930
- F3 Candidate for Chief Justice, 1932
- F4 Candidate for U.S. Senate, 1936
- F5 Candidate for Chief Justice, 1938

SERIES 8: PERSONAL CLIPPINGS, 1917-1961

Box 10

- F1 Harry Palmer news tips, 1930-1942
- F2 Harry Palmer and snakes--clippings, correspondence photo, 1930-1936
- F3 Harry Palmer--verse, visits, banquet programs with Palmer as toastmaster, play program, letters to newspaper, obituaries, 1917-1961
- F4 Arthur Palmer--articles ("Doughnut Squaw"), books given to library, Masonic and American Legion activities, 1930-1963

Box 11

- F5 Mrs. Alma Palmer--birthday celebrations, obituaries, 1931-1949
- F6 Palmers--visits, banquets, swimming, accidents, eligible bachelors, Palmer store buildings in Louisville torn down, 1928-1939
- F7 Palmer friends and relatives--L.J. Mayfields, Nebraska State Society of Southern California, 1927-1961
- Vol. I Scrapbook--Harry Palmer, news tips and articles concerning Harry and Arthur Palmer, 1890-1930 (oversize; shelved with the collection)
- Vol. II Scrapbook, 1918-1930 (oversize, shelved with the collection)

SERIES 9: CARTOONS, UNDATED

- Item 1 Harvard Law Review, 1 original of Harry Palmer and 1 of the Palmer brothers from newspapers, Harry drawn by a student at Nebraska Wesleyan, 1904-1908, 1 anti-Italian cartoon (shelved in oversize cabinet)

SERIES 10: MISCELLANY, 1873-1961

Box 11

- F1 Mrs. Alma Palmer--stories and section of diary, 1907-1919
- F2 Land titles and deeds, 1873-1907
- F3 Miscellany--membership cards, letterheads, postmarks and stamps, 1929-1961
- F4 Miscellany--farm improvement papers, programs, translation of "Doughnut Squaw" story from Swedish magazine article, funeral cards, addresses, list of contents of Harry Palmer's Army foot locker given to NSHS by Arthur Palmer, 1887-1961

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