

Collection #
M 1501

**GEORGE R. AND SARAH WALLET BARRETT
LETTERS, 1914-1919**

Collection Information	1
Biographical Sketch	2
Scope and Content Note	3
Series Contents	4

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript boxes

COLLECTION DATES: 1914-1919

PROVENANCE: David Clifton, 2017

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Mitchell Printing Co. Collection (P0003); Charles M. Gibbs World War I Correspondence, 1919 (SC0480); Mary Early Holliday World War I Reminiscences, 1917-1918 (SC2596); Burford Family Papers, 1836-1942 (M0575)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2017.0405

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

George Russell Barrett (1894-1979) was born to Michael and Georgia (Stroup) Barrett in the small community of Waldron, Indiana, in Shelby County. The family lived in the town's hotel, which was operated by George's maternal grandmother, Isabel Stroup. In addition to those named, the family consisted of George's aunt Louella Stroup and his brother, Luther, who was 14 years George's junior. Consequently, the family often referred to Luther as "Babe." George's father passed away sometime between 1910 and 1915. When George reached the age of 21 he went to Indianapolis to find work, and he lived in various boarding houses on Lexington Avenue in the Fountain Square neighborhood.

Sarah Violet Wallet (1899-1983) was born to John and Emma Kate (Fowler) Wallet in Indianapolis and, like George, grew up in her grandmother's household. Her mother died of heart disease in 1904 and her father, a saloonkeeper, died in 1909 of kidney disease. Her grandmother ran a boarding house on Lexington Avenue.

About eight months after coming to Indianapolis in 1915, George moved into a new room on Lexington, almost directly across the street from Sarah. Eventually the two crossed paths and they began dating. George first mentions his "new girl, Sarah Violet" in a letter to his mother 15 November 1915.

The two quickly became very close, visiting George's family in Waldron often. The orphaned Sarah began calling George's mother Georgia "Mother B.," and often signed letters to her as "your little girl Sarah" or something similar.

George first found work in Indianapolis as an assistant to electrician Henry F. Pratt. However, an electrician's union strike quickly forced him out of the business, and he found work as a typesetter for printer Charles A. Suffrins. He would remain in the printing business for the rest of his career, eventually becoming head of the graphic arts department at Arsenal Technical High School.

Under threat of the general draft in 1917, George was able to secure a position as a printer with the U.S. government in Paris. The position was evidently very comfortable for him and while homesick, he seems to have enjoyed his time in France.

After the war, George and Sarah were married 11 July 1919. They subsequently lived on the north side of Indianapolis, later moving to Carmel. They had one daughter, Betty.

Sources:

Ancestry.com

"George Barrett Taught Printing," *Indianapolis News*, 24 Jan. 1979; Newspapers.com

Maps.indy.gov

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of letters from George and Sarah to George's mother, Georgia, in Waldron. The letters were received from the donor in two distinct groups, and these groups have been maintained in two series. Series I consists of letters home from Indianapolis and other miscellaneous correspondence. Series II consists of George's letters from Paris and Sarah's letters to Georgia during the war period. All letters have been arranged in chronological order.

George's middle name was Russell, and his family (Sarah included) seems to have used that name over George, and he signs most of his letters "Russell."

The collection consists almost exclusively of letters from George and Sarah. The only notable exceptions are two letters from Seventh Day Adventist preacher M. G. Huffman.

In their letters, George and Sarah use period slang and idioms freely. George also highlights his Irish ancestry often, particularly during the month of March. In a private letter to his mother (not to be read to Luther) dated 19 November 1917, he candidly explains that he will soon be drafted unless he can secure a position as a printer. They mention conditions in Indianapolis during and after the war, like the high cost of living (George - 27 Nov. 1916), the absence of young men in the city (George - 17 Sept. 1917), the rationing of sugar (George - 31 Oct. 1917), the armistice celebration (Sarah - 12 Nov. 1918) and the onset of the Spanish Influenza Pandemic (Sarah - 13 Jan. 1919 and 6 March 1919).

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: General Correspondence

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
H.G. Huffman to Louella Stroup and Georgia Barrett, Dec. 1914-Jan. 1915	Box 1, Folder 1
Correspondence, March 1915	Box 1, Folder 2
Correspondence, April 1915	Box 1, Folder 3
Correspondence, May 1915	Box 1, Folder 4
Correspondence, June 1915	Box 1, Folder 5
Correspondence, July 1915	Box 1, Folder 6
Correspondence, August/September 1915	Box 1, Folder 7
Correspondence, October 1915	Box 1, Folder 8
Correspondence, November 1915	Box 1, Folder 9
Correspondence, December 1915	Box 1, Folder 10
Correspondence, January 1916	Box 1, Folder 11
Correspondence, February 1916	Box 1, Folder 12
Correspondence, March 1916	Box 1, Folder 13
Correspondence, April/May 1916	Box 1, Folder 14
Correspondence, June/July 1916	Box 1, Folder 15
Correspondence, 1 August – 7 September 1916	Box 1, Folder 16
Correspondence, 13 September – 6 November 1916	Box 1, Folder 17
Correspondence, 12 November - ? December 1916	Box 2, Folder 1
Correspondence, January 1917	Box 2, Folder 2
Correspondence, February 1917	Box 2, Folder 3
Correspondence, 5 March – 11 March 1917	Box 2, Folder 4

Correspondence, 20 March – 31 May 1917	Box 2, Folder 5
Correspondence, July/August 1917	Box 2, Folder 6
Correspondence, September 1917	Box 2, Folder 7
Correspondence, October 1917	Box 2, Folder 8
Correspondence, November/December 1917	Box 2, Folder 9
Miscellaneous letters, n.d.	Box 2, Folder 16

Series 2: World War I Correspondence

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Correspondence, February – April 1918	Box 2, Folder 10
Correspondence, 1 May – 12 August 1918	Box 2, Folder 11
Correspondence, 20 August – 28 August 1918	Box 2, Folder 12
Correspondence, September – November 1918	Box 2, Folder 13
Correspondence, January – March 1918	Box 2, Folder 14
Empty envelopes, Mar. 1919 and n.d.; Walker's Pure Leaf Tobacco metal clasp, n.d.	Box 2, Folder 15