

Collection #
SC 2757

GREEK CIVIL WAR CORRESPONDENCE, 1947–1948

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Processed by

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 3 manuscript folders, 1 visual folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1947–1948

PROVENANCE: Gail Savage Highland, Ormond Beach, FL, 25 June 2004

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION
NUMBER:

2004.0383

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Annette Savage served as the chairman for the Daniel Wertz Elementary School PTA World Relief Program from 1947–48. The Evansville woman coordinated relief efforts to Greece during the final phase of the Greek Civil War (1942–1949).

Greece suffered throughout World War II and in 1944 Germany invaded the country. A coalition of several Greek factions, including communists, fought off the invaders but internal conflict proved to be just as dangerous. The coalition that defended Greece against Germany was never united and infighting between the left-wing and right-wing forces resulted in civil war. The official administration fled the country during the world war years, and after the liberation from Germany, the conservative government returned to Greece. It was met with the Greek Communists, who wanted power after successfully defending their homeland. The bloody civil war lasted until 1949.

The average Greek citizens were the ones who suffered most during both wars. The Nazi invaders were particularly cruel and tortured many people. In one of the letters in this collection, Panagista Photopolou writes that the Germans cut her husband's leg off when he would not give them the information that they wanted. Both communist and royalist forces were notorious for seizing property and jailing innocent Greek civilians. With the economy in shambles and skirmishes all over the country, people like Photopolou and Joanis Amaxis sank into poverty and despair.

At the end of World War II, United States President Harry S Truman recognized the growing threat of communism to war-devastated countries like Greece and Turkey. He and his advisers feared that communism could easily spread into these regions in the presence of great need and the absence of stable government. The U.S. policy towards communism became one of containment – to stop the spread of communism in the Mediterranean. Economic aid to this region became a top priority in order to take away any appeal that communism might have to the desperately poor people of Greece and Turkey. After much political maneuvering, the Marshall Plan provided this aid, but government funds did not begin to flow in earnest until 1948.

The efforts of the Evansville PTA fit well into this context of containment and aid. While the U.S. Government hammered out the details of the Marshall Plan, average American citizens began raising their own funds to send to Greece and Turkey. School children and their parents gave clothing, food, and money to help their impoverished Greek counterparts. In the case of this collection, the Daniel Wertz Elementary School PTA provided most of the funds to distribute packages of clothing, linens, and other items to families in the town of Patros, Greece. Beginning in 1947 Annette Savage coordinated this effort. When funds were not sufficient to cover the costs of all of the packages she and her husband George gave their own money to buy supplies.

Three of the families that received aid packages corresponded with the Savages. Annette searched for someone in Evansville who could translate the letters from Greek into English and vice versa. She found Nicholas Maglaris and

George Klotras, who charged between thirty-five and seventy cents per translation. Klotras felt that these translations paid a little part of his debt of gratitude to the United States. In one of his letters to the Savages he wrote "this is a small drop of water in the big ocean of help the Americans gave to me when I have been in Greece during the enemy occupation."

This collection consists of correspondence from three families in Patros: Joanis Amaxis, Panagista Photopolous, and Lambrini Manou. The Amaxis family had four children and correspondent Joanis was grateful to receive the aid packages of clothing and curious about the 'Savages' life in America. Amaxis was also an astute observer of the political climate in Greece. In one of her letters she writes "as for the Greek sky, it is clearing. The clouds are moving to their sunset." Nicholas Maglaris suggested this phrase was code for improving economic conditions and the impending final defeat of the communists. In one of her letters Joanis included a family photograph and asked for a picture of the Savages in return.

Lambrini Manou was a widow in Patros with six children. She and her daughter worked in a factory. Panagista Photopolou was in charge of supporting her family her husband lost his job when the Nazis cut off his leg during the occupation. Photopolou requested that the Savages send her material to make her oldest daughter a wedding dress, but the daughter got ill and groom's family canceled the wedding.

According to Annette Savage's daughter, correspondence with the three families ended abruptly in early 1948. One of the translators speculated that either the communists or royalists discovered the aid packages and intercepted them. Savage tried to no avail to locate the families through the YWCA and the Red Cross.

Sources:

Materials in collection

"Greek Civil War" 8 August 2005 <http://www.wikipedia.org>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of twenty-one letters to George and Annette Savage from three families in Greece during 1947–1948, as well as notes from the men who translated the letters into English. Eight of these letters are in the original Greek. Annette Savage was the chairperson for the Daniel Wertz PTA World Relief efforts in Evansville during 1947 and 1948. She was in charge of contacting families in Greece in order to send them aid packages during the final phase of the Greek Civil War. The collection contains letters from three families living in Patros, Greece including Joanis Amaxis, Lambrini Manou, and Panagista Photopolou. The letters mention the economic and political conditions in Greece as well as the families' gratitude for the aid that they received. The letters from expatriate translators Nicholas Maglaris and George Klotas discuss the translations and express gratitude for the Americans' efforts to aid their countrymen. Maglaris is also careful to point out any coded messages about the Greek political climate that the Patros families include in their letters.

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Correspondence from Joanis Amaxis, 14 March
1947–28 September 1947

CONTAINER

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Amaxis Family Photograph

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Correspondence from Panagista Photopolou 19
March 1947–15 March 1948

Folder 2

Correspondence from Lambrini Manou and George
Klotas, 29 March 1947–7 September 1947

Folder 3

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 2757).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.