

Collection #
M 0508
BV 2499–2503
OM 0227

ROWLAND ALLEN PAPERS, 1830–1973

[Collection Information](#)

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Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	Manuscripts: 34 document cases, 5 bound volumes, 1 oversize folder Visuals: 4 photograph boxes, 1 color photograph box, 1 photograph album, 1 OVB photograph box, 3 postcard boxes, 1 Cirkut photograph, 3 tintypes, 1 box of 120mm Acetate Negatives, 1 box of 4x5 Acetate Negatives, 1 5x7 Acetate Negative Artifacts: 1 artifact
COLLECTION DATES:	1830–1973
PROVENANCE:	Received from Rowland Allen through Willard Heiss, Spring, 1973, and Rudolf K. Haerle, September, 1977.
RESTRICTIONS:	Color Photographs and Negatives are in Cold Storage and must be requested in advance. They may be viewed only with assistance of library staff.
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REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	L.S Ayres & Co. Records (M 0616)
ACCESSION NUMBERS:	1973.0705, 1977.1012, 0000.0179
NOTES:	

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Rowland Allen (1897–1973) was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard University in 1919. Allen left Harvard in 1917 and went to France where he served as an ambulance driver on the Verdun front. The following year, he enlisted in the U. S. Navy where he was trained as an aviator at MIT and Pensacola, Florida. Following his graduation from Harvard, Allen worked in the advertising and personnel departments of two Boston department stores (Burton Rogers Co. for five years and Wm. Filenes Sons for two years) before taking the position of Personnel Director for L. S. Ayres in Indianapolis in 1925, a position he held until his retirement in 1962. Allen married Mary Church in 1926 and they were divorced thirteen years later. They had two daughters, Joan Church and Nina Lee.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Allen was a leader in the Indianapolis community. He crusaded against a number of radical organizations and movements including the Ku Klux Klan, National Socialism and Fascism, McCarthyism, and the John Birch Society. He was one of the founders of the Indianapolis Civil Liberties Union in 1953, and served on its board of directors. One of his most publicized fights was the suit to allow ICLU meetings in the Indiana War Memorial. He was awarded the Robert G. Risk civil Liberties Award for distinguished service. He was also the first recipient of the Stephen S. Wise memorial citation from the Indianapolis Chapter of the American Jewish Congress for his fight for civil rights.

Allen was also on the Executive Committee of the Indiana Association for Mental Health and was on the Advisory Committee on the Indiana Section on Alcoholism. He was a past president of the Indianapolis and Indiana Personnel Associations, a consultant for the National Labor Relations Board, and a member of Franklin Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Education (1936). Other organizations which Allen was involved in included the Indiana and Indianapolis Personnel Associations (president of both), Indiana and Indianapolis Chambers of Commerce, the Community Service Council of Metropolitan Indianapolis, the Indiana Association of Licensed Nursing Homes, the Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation (handicapped), Indiana Merit Commission, and the Merit Commission of the City of Indianapolis for the selection of Police and Firemen. He was also on the board of directors for Maplehurst Farms and Flanner House.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The papers include Rowland Allen's personal, professional, and civic correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, publications, photographs, and related materials. Personal materials contain correspondence, news clippings, documents, photographs, and miscellaneous items of Allen and his family.

Included in boxes 1–9 are the letters of Allen's father, William Y., his brother Stratford, and his twin sister, Pauline Allen Davis. Among the letters are those between William Y. and Stratford Allen while the later was in Military School in New Jersey, 1906–1907; between Rowland and his parents and sister while he was at Harvard, 1916 and 1919; in France as an ambulance driver during World War I, 1917, including diary and sketchbooks; at the Naval Aviator training school in Pensacola, Florida, 1918–1919, including diary; between Rowland and Pauline while she was working with the Near East Relief Service in India, Greece, and Turkey in the early 1920s; and between Rowland and William in the 1920s and 1930s, during which time William traveled extensively to the Far East, Europe, and South America.

There are also letters between Rowland Allen and his daughters, Nina Lee Allen Passi, and Joan Allen Walker while they were growing up with their mother in New York City and after when Nina was living in Italy and New York City and Joan was living in Iran, Vermont, and New York City, 1940s–1972. There is correspondence between Rowland and his grandchildren, 1960s, and between Rowland and Stratford Allen, 1920s–1960s. There are also letters, dated 1934–1939, from Mrs. Anne Sellmer, an L. S. Ayres employee.

The papers also include memos, correspondence, reports, and publications regarding Allen's position with L. S. Ayres, 1926–1972 (Boxes 18–20). Topics concern retirement, employment, termination, and the general operation of the department store. There are numerous memoranda from Lyman S. Ayres covering a variety of professional and personal subjects. Also included are reports, minutes, and publications involving Allen's connections with the National Labor Relations Board, the National Industrial Conference Board, merit hiring and equal employment for minorities, and general labor-management relations and studies, 1923–1966 (Boxes 26–27).

There are meeting minutes, reports, studies, correspondence, and publications regarding Allen's work as a member of the Mental Health and Alcohol Commissions for Indiana, 1941–1971, as well as general materials regarding both subjects (Boxes 12–17).

Also included are publications, newspaper clippings, correspondence, and reports dealing with Allen's involvement in the Indiana and the American Civil Liberties Unions such as the general operations, meetings, and specific areas of legal and political involvement where civil liberties may have been violated (Boxes 10–12).

There are materials regarding a variety of political and social subjects including Allen's opposition to political extremist groups such as the John Birch Society, and his feud with the Indianapolis Star and Eugene Pulliam over the paper's conservative stand on politics (Boxes 21–25).

Other subjects contained in the Allen papers include minutes and reports regarding his membership in the Board of Directors of Maplehurst Farms, 1959–1969 (Box 33); his involvement with the "Insight" TV program on WFBM in Indianapolis, 1960s (Box 34); local subjects and problems for Indianapolis such as retail businesses opening on Sunday, advertising on courtesy benches, housing and equal employment, senior citizens and nursing homes, and education, 1934–1970 (Boxes 28–32); and correspondence and materials from local political, civic, and social organizations with which Allen was affiliated such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Service Council, the Merit Commission for Indianapolis police and firemen, the Indianapolis Literary Club, and the Indiana Arts Commission, 1937–1970 (Boxes 28–30).

Photographs and negatives are stored separately from the manuscript materials. The images are described in the Contents sections of the collection guide.

One artifact, R 0617, a police citation board (hard rubber, Indianapolis Police Department M.F.M., n.d.) is stored with the Artifact collection.

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Robenia Gratz Allen:
[decorative card with her name on verso]
[2 copy negative portraits]

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4x5 Acetate
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Box 1, Negative 1

5x7 Acetate Negative

1. Wm. Allen and [Robenia Allen];
2. Wm. Allen and Isaac Allen,
3. [Wm. Allen and four men, Allen is wearing a derby hat]

3 Loose Tintypes

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Photos of Wedding of Allen's Daughter, Joan and H. Brooks Walker, 1951	Color Photographs: Box 1, Folder
Allen's Daughter, Nina, in France, Her Wedding, 1951–1959	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 2
Photographs and Portraits of Friends, 1944–1958, n.d.	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 3

Photographs, Gathering at Allen's Home, Sept. 21, 1952

Photographs:
Box 4, Folder 4

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 3
Envelopes 29–39

Wedding at Allen's Home, Sept. 1952

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 9

Brown County Family Outing, Nov., 1952

Photographs:
Box 4, Folder 5

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 3
Envelopes 40, 41

Christmas, 1952

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 3
Envelope 42

Brown County family outing, Oct. 1953

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 3
Envelopes 43–45

Family outside, August, 1956

Photographs:
Box 4, Folder 6

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 3
Envelopes 46–48

Vacation Pictures, Unidentified Woman at a party, 1956

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 10

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 4
Envelope 49

Unidentified Woman outside country view, 1957

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 11

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 4
Envelope 50

Alex at Lake Fairlee [Rowland's grandson], Sept. 1959

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 12

Rowland at Home, Room Decorated for a Party, Trees,
1960s

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 13

Garden and Persian Rug, June, 1961

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 14

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 4
Envelopes 62–64

Photographs, Farm Pictures, April, 1962

Photographs:
Box 4, Folder 7

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 4
Envelopes 65–67

Photographs, Family Pictures, May, 1962

Photographs:
Box 4, Folder 8

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 4
Envelope 68

Allen's Car and Garden, May, 1962

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 15

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 4
Envelopes 69–71

Allen's Desk, May, 1962

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 4
Envelopes 72, 73

Photographs, Stone Busts and Sculptures,
September 15, 1962

Photographs:
Box 4, Folder 9

Allen and others on porch, garden & house winter scenes,
1962

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 16

Saarinen's New Christian Church, Columbus, Ind.,
August, 1963

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 5
Envelopes 74, 75

Allen with two women, unidentified building, 1963

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 17

Photographs, Bust of Gandhi, May 15, 1964

Photographs:
Box 4, Folder 10

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 5
Envelope 78

Allen with Dorothy [Isaacs?], Louisville, Kentucky,
Oct. 28, 1965

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 18

Artworks and Oriental Carpets, 1963, 1965, 1966

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 19

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 5
Envelopes 76, 77

Anne Sellmer, 1960, 1966

Color Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 20

120mm Acetate
Negatives:
Box 1, Bin 5
Envelope 79

Allen on vacations and with others, 1966, 1967, 1969	Color Photographs: Box 1, Folder 21
Alex with a beard and Valentine note to Allen, 1970	Color Photographs: Box 1, Folder 22
Collins, Harriet, and Quentin Reynolds and friend, 1971	Color Photographs: Box 1, Folder 23
S. Rowland Allen and Family, 1972–1973	Color Photographs: Box 1, Folder 24
Interiors of Allen's Home, n.d.	120mm Negatives: Box 1, Bin 5 Envelopes 81–84
Photographs, Young Girl with dolls, [probably Allen's daughter] n.d.	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 11 4x5 Acetate Negatives Box 1, Negatives 4,5
Photographs, Exterior of Allen's Home, Cars, n.d.	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 12
Photographs, Allen's Garden and Sculptures, n.d.	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 13 120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 9 Envelopes 137–147
Photographs, Persian Rug and Allen with Rug, n.d.	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 14 4x5 Acetate Negatives Box 1, Negatives 6–12
Photographs, Fall Picnic, n.d.	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 15 120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 5 Envelopes 85–88

Family Vacation, n.d.	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 5 Envelopes 89, 90
Allen with Friends or Family, n.d. [color]	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 6 Envelopes 92–96
Allen's house and garden, n.d. [color]	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 6 Envelopes 97–99
Older gentleman seated on porch, n.d.	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 6 Envelopes 100–103
Allen's Friends and Family in the country, n.d.	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 7 Envelopes 104–115
Oriental Garden, n.d. [color]	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 7 Envelopes 116–120
Winter views of woods, cabin, and creek, n.d.	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 7 Envelopes 121–124
Allen's Home, Garden, and Sculptures, n.d.	120mm Acetate Negatives: Box 1, Bin 8 Envelopes 125–136
Purdue Fraternity Photograph, n.d. [ca. 1920s]	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 16
Unidentified Outdoor Auction or Sale, ca. 1950s	Photographs: Box 4, Folder 17

“Twelfth Annual Personnel Conference” at the Royal
York Hotel, Toronto, 1954

OVB Photographs:
Box 1, Folder 3