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Coll. 572
W. Russell Massey, Sr. (1890-1970)

by John McKiernan
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Biography

W. Russell Massey was born in Trenton in 1890 and resided there until 1952 when he moved his family to Fairless Hills, PA. He kept his Insurance Agency in Trenton until his retirement in 1968 when he sold the business to Karl Weidel. It was originally located at 219 North Warren Street and then moved to 112 North Montgomery Street in 1966.

After graduating from Trenton Central High School in 1908, he became a *Trenton Times* reporter and wrote a column covering the news of the public schools, as well as the first sporting column for the newspaper. He attended the University of Pennsylvania School of Engineering and worked for several years in the drawing room of the Trenton Branch of the American Bridge Company, concentrating on buildings. In 1919, he worked in England and Canada as the foreign agent of an import-export company specializing in German dyes. From 1920-1926, he was manager of the Trenton business office for Bell Telephone Company.

In 1913, he organized and was first Scoutmaster for Boy Scouts Trenton Troop #12 which met at the Prospect Street Presbyterian Church. His troop once marched from Trenton to Asbury Park in two days and was given the keys to the city by the Asbury Park mayor. He was the volunteer director in charge of the older boys' group of the East Trenton Community Center at North Clinton and Girard Avenues, which later became a branch of the Trenton Free Public Library. After moving to Fairless Hills, he revived Cub Scout Pack #90 in that town in 1954. Other affiliations included the Trenton Engineers Club, Mercer County Board of Realtors, Free and Accepted Masons #120 Trenton, and Crescent Temple Order of Mystic Shriners Trenton.

Scope and Content Notes

This collection of papers and photographs was received from the estate in 2022 and 2023. The bulk of the collection contains family photographs, many that are identified, but there is no family tree to accompany the images although many of the people are identified. Sarah A. Seeds was Massey's maternal grandmother, who was the mother of Margaret L. Seeds, his mother. Massey's father was Hammatt Thomas Massey.

Series Description

The collection is housed in a document box and a flat box, and is divided into three series: I. Family Papers, II. Photographs, and III. Artifacts.

Series I: Family Papers

Includes diploma from Joseph Wood Grammar School (1905); Boy Scouts of America Scout Master certificate (1913) and photographs; passport (1919); Free & Accepted Masons No. 120 directory (1930); Peace Celebration program (1919); 40th anniversary gift bond for the Central Methodist Episcopal Church (1905); baby bracelet for W. Russell Massey Jr. (b.1946). Also includes general material collected by the family, such as a World's Fair program (1940). In addition to these, this series contains a small copy of the New Testament, belonging to Frank Seeds. In a small brown folder are several documents including the will of Sarah A. Seeds and Charles W. Seeds. Also, in this folder is the mortgage papers of 258 Mercer St. attributed to Franklin M. Seeds; a "Deed of Assignment Bond Mortgage"; and a "Deed for 724 Riverside Ave" attributed to Mrs. Maggie Massey.

Series II: Photographs

The bulk of the collection is comprised of photographs, including carte-de-visites and cabinet cards, most of which are identified, and a photo album of cabinet cards that belonged to Massey's mother, Margaret (Maggie) Massey nee Seeds. The photos have been separated into various folders based on the family name (Massey or Seeds) on the back of the photo. Photos of individuals with the same last name were kept together as much as possible.

Series III: Artifacts

These items are located in the Museum Collection and include a silver baby spoon; two silver butter knives in a box from Croasdale & Engelhart Jewelers; six silver spoons in a felt pouch; and a silver spoon in a Voorhees felt pouch.

Container List

Box / Folder Title

1 / 1	Family Papers – Boy Scouts Scout Master Certificate and photographs
1 / 2	Family Papers – 40 th Anniversary Gift Bond, Central M.E. Church
1 / 3	Family Papers – General Material
1 / 4	Family Papers – Wills and Deeds
OS box 6	Family Papers – Joseph Wood School diploma
1 / 5	Photographs – Massey
1 / 6	Photographs – Seeds

Container List (cont.)

Box / Folder Title

1 / 6a	Photographs – Seeds
1 / 7	Photographs – Frank Seeds
1 / 7a	Photographs – Jennie Seeds Brown
1 / 8	Photographs – Children
1 / 9	Photographs – Frank Mutchler[?]
1 / 10	Photographs – Misc. Identified
2 /	Photo album – Maggie L. Massey, 1887

Provenance

2022.013 and 2023.010