

Record Series #: 1121-120**Name: Mary L. Ayers World War II scrapbook****Dates: 1942-1943, no date****Extent/Size: 0.5 oversized box (0.1 cubic feet)****Language: English****Name of Creator(s):**

Mary L. Ayers

Biographical History:

Mary Elizabeth "Lizzie" Sellers was born in Baxley, Georgia, on February 20, 1877 to Samuel (1850-1918) and Louise Sellers (1858-1946). Mary was the oldest of nine children and the family lived and worked on a farm. She was educated at Atlanta University and Spelman Baptist Seminary (presently Spelman College) in the 1890s. Mary held various jobs over the years including working in millinery, teaching, and secretarial work.

On October 20, 1904, Mary married William Judson Ayers (1875-1951) in Ashburn, Georgia. William Judson Ayers was born to Jackson and Annie Ayers in Milledgeville, Georgia, on February 6, 1875. He was educated at Connecticut Industrial School in Thomasville, Georgia. He was self-employed as a contractor and served as President of the Stanley and Ayers Company for ten years. Mary and William Ayers had two children together while they lived in Ashburn. The first born was Willa Mae (1905-1991) and the second child born to the couple was Samuel Judson (1911-1968).

The family moved to Savannah around 1916 and turned the community into their long-term home. Mary Ayers helped the American Red Cross Savannah Chapter nurses and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) during World War II. She served as secretary for the Order of the Eastern Star (OES) for over twenty years. Samuel Ayers worked for his father as a contractor and for the *Savannah Tribune*, a local African American newspaper. Willa Mae Ayers married Ezra Johnson (1893-1993), a postal carrier and real estate agent, around 1960 and she worked in social work. William Ayers died in 1951 and Mary Ayers died on May 6, 1965. The family is buried in Laurel Grove South Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia.

Scope & Content:

The Mary L. Ayers World War II scrapbook includes newspaper articles from the years 1942 through 1943 detailing African American women's involvement in the home front in Savannah during the war. Articles detail American Red Cross Savannah Chapter nurse training programs and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) program in Savannah. Other topics featured in the scrapbook include articles regarding Liberty Ships and successful women. Several photographs accompany the articles and are clipped from *Savannah Morning News*, *Savannah Evening Press*, and *Savannah Tribune*. The articles that mention the creator, Mary L. Ayers, are of note to learn more about her involvement in the war and the important contributions African American women made during World War II.

System of Arrangement & Ordering:

The Mary L. Ayers World War II scrapbook is retained in the original order as created by Mary L. Ayers.

Record Series 1121-120, Mary L. Ayers World War II scrapbook***Conditions Governing Access:***

Collection is stored offsite and researchers must request desired records at least one (1) full business day before scheduled research appointment for access.

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Digital Access:

The scrapbook can be found online [here](#).

Related Collections:

Record Series 1121-102, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Savannah branch records. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Record Series 1121-112, W. W. Law Personal papers. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Access Points:

African American nurses
 Anderson, Marian, 1897-1993
 American National Red Cross. Bureau of Nursing Service
 American Red Cross. Savannah Chapter
 Ayers, Mary L., 1877-1965
 Beauty contestants
 Carver, George Washington, 1864-1943
 Liberty Ships
 McDaniel, Etta, 1890-1946
 United States. Army. Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
 World War, 1939-1945
 World War, 1939-1945--Participation, African American

1121-120 GSM-gau (USMARC)

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City of Savannah, Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia [GSG (OCLC/LYRASIS)]

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World War, 1939-1945--Women--United States

Sponsors/Funding:

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Processed by:

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Record Series 1121-120, Mary L. Ayers World War II scrapbook

Inventory:

Box

Folder Number

Folder Title, Date (s) [Archivist notes]

Box 1121-000-0004

*To view the scrapbook in its entirety, visit the Municipal Archives [online database](#).

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| Folder 1121-120-001 | Front cover, envelope of ties that bound the scrapbook, and five scrapbook pages, 1942, no date |
| Folder 1121-120-002 | Five scrapbook pages, 1942-1943, no date |
| Folder 1121-120-003 | Four scrapbook pages, back cover, and detached news articles, 1942-1943, no date |