



Edward Walter Sowers Papers (R0135)

Collection Number: R0135

Collection Title: Edward Walter Sowers Papers

Dates: 1942-1980, bulk 1961-1979

Creator: Sowers, Edward Walter, 1905-1982

Abstract: The Edward Walter Sowers Papers contains correspondence, business papers, and miscellaneous printed materials of a newspaper editor and publisher at Rolla, Phelps County, Missouri. Topics include the Sowers family, journalism and the newspaper business, the University of Missouri, and United States politics and foreign relations.

Collection Size: 2 cubic feet
(107 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research, but is partially stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](http://www.shsmo.org). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Edward Walter Sowers Papers* (R0135); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by the Rolla Daily News on May 4, 1982 (Accession No. RA0124).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Edward Walter Sowers Papers can be found in the following collections:

Young Americans for Freedom, Rolla High School Chapter Records (R0639)

Processed by: Processed by John F. Bradbury, January 31, 1983. Revised by Kathleen Seale, May 1, 2020.

Biographical Note:

Edward Walter Sowers was born on April 1, 1905, at Waverly, Missouri, the first of ten children born to William and Alice Staley Sowers. He was reared on farms near Hazel Hill and Mayview, and was educated at schools in Mayview and Higginsville. He attended the University of Missouri at Columbia, and earned a degree in journalism in 1928. Soon after his graduation he moved to Boonville, Missouri, upon being offered a position as editor of the *Boonville Advertiser*. It was in Boonville that he met Alma Skerik, whom he married in June 1937. Sowers continued to edit newspapers in Boonville and Excelsior Springs until 1942, when he and two silent partners bought the weekly *Rolla New Era*. He soon bought out his partners and reorganized the paper as a five-day daily, the *Rolla Daily News*. In partnership with his wife and three sons, he continued to publish the paper until his death from heart disease in 1982.

During his lifetime Sowers was editor and/or owner and publisher of ten Missouri newspapers. They included the *Boonville Advertiser* and *Central Missourian* in Boonville, the *Excelsior Springs Daily Standard*, the *St. James Leader* and *St. James Journal*, the Fort Leonard Wood *Sentinel* and *Gateway Guide*, and the *Rolla Advertiser*, *Rolla New Era*, and *Rolla Daily News*.

The University of Missouri was one of Sowers's constant concerns, particularly in regard to operations related to its campus at Rolla. Although he was an alumnus of the Columbia campus, and served as president of its Alumni Association in 1962-1963, Sowers remained sensitive to the needs of the Rolla campus. He successfully lobbied against the separation of the Rolla campus, then known as the University of Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy, from the University System.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following six series with two subseries:

- Sowers Family
- Sowers Newspapers, Inc.
- Newspaper Associations
- University of Missouri
- Politics and Foreign Relations
 - Printed Materials
 - Correspondence
- Correspondence

Scope and Content Note:

Sowers Family

This series contains miscellaneous papers, including a genealogy of the Sowers family and an autobiography by Edward W. Sowers; correspondence concerning the Reverend and Mrs. Paul Skerik of Vsetin, Czechoslovakia, cousins of Alma Skerik Sowers; and a printed pamphlet concerning the Sowers family's trip to Europe in 1964. This series is arranged by subject matter.

Sowers Newspapers, Inc.

This series consists of correspondence concerning several press associations with which Edward W. Sowers was allied as a member and/or officer. Most of the material in the collection pertains only to the *Rolla Daily News* and the *Gateway Guide*, but there are two folders of correspondence and allied material concerning the *Sentinel*, a weekly paper published by Sowers for one year under contract with the United States Army at Fort Leonard Wood. This series is arranged by subject matter.

University of Missouri

This series contains correspondence with chancellors and officers of the University of Missouri system, particularly in connection with the Rolla and Columbia campuses, and search for a chancellor at Rolla. There are also materials related to Sowers' tenure as president of the University of Missouri Alumni Association, and reunions of the Class of 1928 at Columbia, Missouri. The files also contain numerous letters to and from governors, legislators, curators, and chancellors, and they reflect Sowers's concern for the Rolla campus, especially in searches for new chancellors. This series is arranged in its original order.

Politics and Foreign Relations

This series contains printed materials and correspondence regarding Sowers' interest and participation in politics and foreign relations. Sowers was intensely interested in American foreign policy, and there are a dozen folders concerned with the topic. He traveled extensively throughout the world on tours that were as much "fact-finding" trips as they were vacations. His itineraries included Europe, South America, Africa, China, and Taiwan. His impressions during these travels led him to worry that the United States was losing its grip on world leadership to communism, and he was convinced that the American government was pursuing absolutely the wrong courses in instituting trade sanctions against Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and in opening negotiations which would transfer control of the Panama Canal, the latter a subject of his fiercest editorials. The printed materials subseries contains his observations that were printed as editorials in the *Rolla Daily News*, and later he published them in a three-part series of pamphlets, "Jet Hopping Up and Down and Around the World." Part Three of the series describes his visit to East Asia in 1977 as a member of a "Study Mission" sponsored by the National Newspaper Association. Several members of the group also published their own observations on the trip, which included both China and Taiwan. The correspondence subseries contains correspondence, editorial, and miscellaneous printed materials concerning various conservative political causes and associations, organized alphabetically by topic.

General Correspondence

This series consists of general correspondence with legislators, public officials, business associates, and personal friends. A prolific correspondent and editorialist, Sowers had a long-standing policy of forwarding copies of his significant writings to numerous state and federal legislators, officials, and fellow newspaper professionals. His files contain correspondence with many Missouri governors and legislators, including John M. Dalton, Christopher "Kit" Bond, Stuart Symington, James Kirkpatrick, and Richard Ichord. He also corresponded frequently with officials of the Nixon administration and with Ronald Reagan's campaign committees. The series is arranged alphabetically.

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 - f. 2 Sowers biography and family papers, 1956-1966
 - f. 3 "Philip Sauer and His Legacy to American – The Sowers Clan," by Edward W. Sowers, 1967
 - f. 4 Correspondence with Reverend and Mrs. Paul Sherik, 1964-1978
 - f. 5 "The Sowers Newspaper Family's 'Big Lift' to Europe," by Edward W. Sowers, 1963-1964
 - f. 6 Photographs, no date
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