

**PRELIMINARY INVENTORY**  
**S0488 (SA2867, SA2868, SA3251)**  
**SELWYN PEPPER PAPERS**

This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center- St. Louis](http://The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center- St. Louis). If you would like more information, please contact us at [stlouis@shsmo.org](mailto:stlouis@shsmo.org).

**Introduction**

Approximately 2 cubic feet

Selwyn Pepper was a St. Louis-area journalist who began career at "The Scrippage," the Soldan high newspaper. In 1935, Pepper joined the staff of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and covered major news stories, including heatwaves, riverfront bond issue fraud, and the Cardinals' World Series win in 1946. The collection includes correspondence, photographs, and newspaper clippings.

Selwyn Pepper's career as a journalist began with the school newspaper of Soldan High, The Scrippage. As an editor and reporter for the paper in 1931, Pepper published a report on the son of St. Louis Post-Dispatch news editor Ben Reese, a Soldan alumnus who at the time played basketball for Yale University. Reese noticed the story and gave Pepper a summer job as a cub reporter. Pepper served in the U. S. Armed Forces as a sergeant while an editor for the Jefferson Barracks Hub in 1941 and 1942. As a major in 1945, Pepper reported on the war crimes trial of Japanese General Yamashita in Manila. After Pepper received a political science degree from Washington University in 1935, he joined the regular staff of the Post.

Pepper's earliest assignment was to report on events at City Hospital during the 1934 and 1936 heat waves that caused the deaths of over forty people. He also developed stories for the Post's best-known investigative reporters, John Rogers and Theodore Link. In 1936 Pepper shared a Pulitzer Prize with the Post's staff for a series about election fraud on a bond issue intended to clear riverfront property. He also covered many infamous local crime stories, including the Bobby Greenlease kidnap/murder and the Mary Catherine Reardon murder.

Pepper also worked on two other Pulitzer Prize-winning exposes: the first uncovered corruption in the Internal Revenue Service leading to the resignation of the national and local heads of the agency; the second reported on a 1947 mine disaster in Centralia, Illinois in which 111 miners died. The latter report led to the enactment of significant changes in mine safety laws. Other significant stories written by Pepper included a report on bail bonds abuse in 1947 and one on the deaths of nineteen people from toxic pollution in Donora, Pennsylvania in 1948, an early instance of reporting on environmental hazards. Pepper also wrote the front page news feature on the St. Louis Cardinals' 1946 World Series win.

In the early 1950s, Pepper wrote a major series covering the impoverished conditions of city schools, and another on organized crime in the U. S., the latter written with Ted Link. In 1950 Pepper interviewed Kansas City crime boss Charles Binaggio just before Binaggio's assassination. Pepper also contributed to the Post's investigation of the Navy's Alaska Oil Reserve fight.

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In October 1973, Pepper edited the front-page Post story reporting on Richard Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" dismissal of Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox and Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus. He worked with reporter Richard Dudman on an important series about the Vietnam War entitled Dateline: Vietnam in 1977.

Pepper served as the president of Sigma Delta Chi, the St. Louis Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists from 1984 to 1985. Under his leadership, the Society sponsored talks by Jeffrey Gluck, the last publisher of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Gluck, a local entrepreneur who attempted to revive the failing paper with questionable business practices, angered local journalists to whom he wrote bad paychecks. His appearance at the professional society for journalists caused a storm of controversy among members.

During the course of his career at the Post, Pepper worked at various times as city editor, news editor, features magazine editor, reporter, and rewriter. At the time of his retirement from the newspaper in 1982, Pepper was serving as its Reader's Advocate. In 1986 the Journalism Foundation gave Pepper its lifetime achievement award for his contributions to St. Louis journalism. Pepper continued as a writer, editor, and public relations consultant after retirement, and as an interviewer for the Creative Aging radio program on KWMU.

**Donor Information**

The papers were donated to University of Missouri by Selwyn Pepper on July 7, 1988 (Accession No. SA2867). An addition was made on July 18, 1988 by Selwyn Pepper (Accession No. SA2868). An addition was made on March 11, 1997 by Selwyn Pepper (Accession No. SA3251).

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**Box List**

**Box 1**

Soldan High School *Scrippage*, February 6, 1931- May 29, 1931  
*Washington* University Student Life, September 25, 1934-March 26, 1935 (5 folders)  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 26, 1936-March 10, 1938  
Jefferson Barracks Hub, June 28, 1941-February 28, 1942 (3 folders)  
Diggers (Aussie Soldiers), Frank Johnson, Sydney, Australia, 1943

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Public Relations Guide, Press Section, U. S. Army Forces, Pacific, August 1945  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 1928-1954 (3 folders)  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch, newspaper clippings and typed copy, General Yamashita War Crimes Trial, 1945  
*St. Louis Star-Times*, Last Edition, July 11, 1946  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* "Bail Bondsmen," newspaper clippings, 1947  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 1947-1949 (2 folders)  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Donora, Pennsylvania Pollution Disaster Series, 1948  
(Includes Photographs 488.1 and 488.2)  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, newspaper clippings, 1948-1960 (2 folders)  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, PD Notebook, March 1957  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Advertisement, June 24, 1960  
American Press Institute, City Editors Seminar, Jan.-Feb. 1965  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Nixon Fires Cox, Ruckelshaus; Atty. General Richardson Resigns," edited by Pepper, October 21, 1973  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Richard Dudman's "Dateline: Vietnam," 1977  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Ideals In Transition: Tomorrow's America," March 25, 1979  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Progress And Reform: The First Hundred Years," March 25, 1979  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Reader's Advocate Column, "The Janet Cooke Hoax: Could It Happen Here?," April 26, 1981  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "An Old Soldier's Stories," Reunion of Douglas MacArthur's public relations staff, Nov. 23, 1985  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Original Weatherbird Sketch and Typographic Plate, no date  
Sigma Delta Chi, Appearance by Jeffrey Gluck, Correspondence and Articles, September 1984- Sept. 1985  
Outline for Talk At Public Relations Seminar, 1985

**Box 2**

Correspondence, 1930-1995 (7 folders)  
Newspaper clippings and writings  
    Newspaper clippings, 1928-1939 (3 folders)  
    Flannery on Roosevelt, 1936  
    KATZ Drug Store, 1936  
    Morgan, Henry, 1937  
    Rhine, J. B., Letter, 1938  
    Newspaper clippings, 1940-1945 (2 folders)  
    *National Municipal Review*, May 1941  
    *Washington University Magazine*, 1/58  
    Bio, 1960  
    Caniff, Milton, 1960  
    United Hebrew Temple, JFK Memorial, 11/25/63

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Laitin, Joseph, 1963-1965  
Memos to J. P. Jr., 1964  
Press Club, 1976  
Memos To Lipman, 1978-1979  
Multiple Sclerosis, 1990  
Reader's Advocate Columns and Correspondence, 1980-1981  
Weekly Newspaper Editors Conference, 1981  
October Surprise newspaper (Reagan Election), 1981  
Retirement Letters, 1981  
Retirement Newspaper clipping, 1981  
Newspaper clipping, 1982  
1982  
Speeches, 1982-83  
*St. Louis Magazine*, 1983-1985  
Topics in Communications Class, 1984  
Driscoll, George, 1984  
Baulch, Jerry T., 1985  
"Taking Care of Mother," 1985  
*Law School Magazine*, Washington University, 1986  
Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Day, 1986  
Second 50 Forum, 9/86  
Archives List, 1988  
Multiple Sclerosis White Paper, 1989  
Frankfort, 1990  
deBurgos, Harry, 1990  
OASIS, 6/25/91  
Persian Gulf War Censorship, 1991  
Soldan Reunion, 1991  
Kimbrough, Mary, 1992  
Dilliard, Irving, 1995  
60th Reunion, Class of 1935, 1995  
Sigma Alpha Mu  
Writings  
Photographs, 580.1; 580.2

**Cabinet 1, Drawer 5**

**Oversize**

*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Franklin D. Roosevelt: Photo Sketch of Career of the War President," April 13, 1945  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "The Centralia Mine Disaster" Special Section, April 30, 1947; and PD Notebook Volume 2, Number 11, Jan. 1952  
*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* "Progress or Decay?" Series, Collected Edition, May

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1950

*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 14 Historic Pages, 1969