



Teresa Gallagher Papers (S0871)

Collection Number: S0871

Collection Title: Teresa Gallagher Papers

Dates: 1927-1988

Creator: Gallagher, Teresa

Abstract: This collection contains correspondence, meeting minutes, agendas, newspaper clippings, articles, photographs, and audio recordings. The materials in this collection document Teresa Gallagher's involvement with the Thomas A. Dooley Foundation, the Tom Dooley Heritage, Inc., and other organizations and people who worked to continue Dr. Tom Dooley's mission to provide medical care to developing nations. The collection also includes information regarding Gallagher's book *Give Joy to My Youth: A Memoir of Dr. Tom Dooley*.

Collection Size: 5 cubic feet
(125 folders, 81 photographs, 5 volumes, 7 audio recordings, 3 oversize)

Language: The majority of the collection materials are in English. Folders 1, 53, and 71 include materials written in Laotian. Folder 2 includes materials in French. Folder 59 includes materials in Vietnamese. Folder 82 includes materials in Chinese.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](https://www.shsmo.org). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center. Folders 34-35, 50-57, 59-60, 62, and 65-68 contain confidential information and may not be viewed for 50 years following the donation date. These folders are kept at the end of the collection in a separate box. Additionally, some audio is recorded on SoundScriber vinyl and Flexi Disc vinyl, which SHSMO does not have the ability to play.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Dooley Heritage, Inc. Records* (S0871); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by Teresa E. Gallagher on January 22, 1988 (Accession No. SA2834).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Dooley Heritage, Inc. Records can be found in the following collections:

Thomas A. Dooley Papers (S0464)

Earl Rhine Papers (S0627)

Medicine in the Jungle Web Exhibit Collection (S0651)

Dr. Tom Dooley Commemorative Stamp Collection (S1170)

Processed by: Processed by Western Historical Manuscript Collection staff January 1988.
Revised by Zack Palitzsch September 2020.

Historical Note:

Teresa Gallagher was born in 1927 and worked as a secretary for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife) in New York. In 1956, after reading Dr. Thomas A. Dooley's book, *Deliver Us from Evil*, Gallagher decided to devote her life to Dooley's mission to provide medical aid to Southeast Asian villages. Gallagher volunteered all of her free time to Dooley's cause. One of her first acts was organizing a group in New York to send "Dooley Kits" to Dooley's medical clinic along the border of Laos, five miles south of the Chinese border. The kits were filled with soap, toothpaste, and lollipops. After several months, Dooley returned from Asia, wanting to meet with Gallagher in New York, starting a close relationship between the two. During the next five years, until Dooley's death in January 1961, Gallagher served as Dooley's volunteer secretary. As his secretary, Dooley requested that Gallagher handle all of his mail. Because of the large volume of mail Dooley received, she had to organize the "Dr. Dooley Disc Team," a volunteer group that transcribed audio replies from Dooley to help facilitate responses.

In November 1957, Dooley and Dr. Peter Comanduras founded the Medical International Cooperation Organization, or MEDICO. MEDICO sought to provide person-to-person medical service to villagers in developing nations. MEDICO consisted of volunteer doctors and humanitarians who would provide aid; build, stock and supply hospitals; and train medical staff for hospitals in remote areas. Because of Dooley's status as a charismatic, celebrity doctor, MEDICO was able to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical supplies within its first two years. Gallagher continued to handle not only Dooley's mail and replies, but MEDICO doctors and volunteers as well. Dooley's idea was to build the small hospitals, train the staff, then hand the hospital over to the host country's government after 16 months. After Dooley died in January 1961, Dooley's brother Malcolm Dooley took over as the Executive Director of MEDICO.

Within the nine months following Thomas A. Dooley's death, the donations MEDICO received increasingly diminished, until the organization folded in September 1961. It was later absorbed into the umbrella corporation Care International in 1962, while keeping the name MEDICO. The same month MEDICO closed, volunteer doctor Verne Chaney, along with Malcolm Dooley, Teresa Gallagher, and other associates of Thomas Dooley founded the Thomas A. Dooley Foundation. The Foundation was established to continue Dooley's vision to provide medical care to people in developing nations. Chaney served as the first director. Gallagher served on the Board of Directors and was the Chairman of the New York City chapter of the Foundation. Throughout the 1960s, the foundation not only maintained the hospitals that Dooley built and left

behind, but also erected new hospitals and orphanages all over Asia, Africa, and Central and South America.

Shortly following the Foundation's inception, Chaney and Malcolm Dooley began disagreeing on Chaney's leadership. By the end of the 1960s, many of the other Foundation members disagreed with Chaney's management of the Foundation as well, including Gallagher and her New York City chapter. The records do not describe what specifically caused the fallout, but the *Thomas A. Dooley Papers* (S0464) note that foundation members disagreed with Chaney over the Foundation's fiscal management. On April 23, 1970, all but six members and one board member elected to pull out of the Foundation and the New York City chapter was dissolved. Gallagher was one of the six that had not chosen to pull out. However, while still on the Board of Directors, she brought together the former Foundation members and created a new Dooley organization. This new, separate organization, called the Tom Dooley Heritage, served a similar purpose as the Foundation in that it sought to continue Dooley's work by providing medical care to those in desperate need in Asia. Their first meeting occurred on June 7, 1970 and they filed their incorporation papers the same month. In January 1971, Gallagher left the Foundation. The Heritage's incorporation papers remained unsigned until July 1972.

The Tom Dooley Heritage, Inc. was a non-profit organization and derived its funds from private and organizational donors and grants from around the world. Much like MEDICO, the Heritage would build hospitals, train staff, and after a certain amount of time, would hand over the hospital to the host country's government. In 1977, the Heritage constructed and maintained the Tom Dooley Memorial Hospital in Ban Nam Yao, Thailand. The Memorial Hospital served over 13,000 refugees from Laos and over 15,000 Thai villagers until it was consolidated into the Thai government's Ministry of Public Health in 1984. Two years later, the Heritage opened the Highland Health Center in northern Thailand near the border of Burma. The Highland Health Center operated for five years until it too was integrated into the Thai health system.

Teresa Gallagher retired in 1992 and died in 1997. The Tom Dooley Heritage was renamed Dr. Tom Dooley Foundation following Gallagher's retirement. The Dr. Tom Dooley Foundation is no longer working in Asia, but instead is actively providing medical aid, support, and education in 13 African countries.

Arrangement:

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

Correspondence

Thomas A. Dooley

Medico

Thomas A. Dooley Foundation

Administration

Correspondence

New York City Chapter

Projects

Publications

Tom Dooley Heritage, Inc.

Correspondence

Dr. Thomas A. Dooley Cause

Events

Photographs
Audio
Books
Oversize

Scope and Content Note:

Correspondence

This series contains correspondence related to Teresa Gallagher's personal and professional life, and her book *Give Joy to My Youth: A Memoir of Dr. Tom Dooley*. Included in the series is correspondence regarding Tom Dooley's death and Dr. Dooley's Disc Team as well as Gallagher's correspondence with doctors and volunteers in villages throughout Southeast Asia. Materials of note in this series include personal letters from Tom Dooley to Gallagher that describe the mundane things Dooley does at the villages he works at, including watching Disney movies with the villagers on a 16mm projector that was personally given to Dooley for the village by Walt Disney. The materials in this series date from 1944 to 1986 and are arranged chronologically.

Dr. Thomas A. Dooley

The series contains newspaper clippings, newsletters, correspondence, biographies, and Dooley's publications documenting Dr. Thomas A. Dooley's life and involvement in Southeast Asia as a humanitarian, author, and founder of MEDICO. It also documents Dooley's legacy following his death. Materials of note include articles written by Dooley regarding conditions in Vietnam and Laos during the late 1950s as well as newsletters updating the world on Dooley's work and progress in Southeast Asia. This series also documents the accolades Dooley received, including a posthumous Congressional Medal Award. The materials in this series date from 1957 to 1978 and are arranged chronologically.

Medical International Cooperation Organization

This series contains articles, advertisements, correspondence, newspaper clippings, reports, meeting minutes, bylaws, and membership lists regarding MEDICO's medical support efforts in developing nations. Materials of note include reports from MEDICO's volunteer doctors on the state of the villages, villagers, and hospitals for which they provided care. The materials in this series date from 1958 to 1978 and are arranged chronologically.

Thomas A. Dooley Foundation

This series documents Gallagher's duties in the Foundation as the Chairperson of the New York City chapter, which included managing volunteers, projects, and outreach in New York City. The series also documents the Foundation's medical work in villages throughout Laos, Vietnam, and India. Materials include correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, newspaper clippings, newsletters, advertisements, articles, and booklets. Materials of note in this series include reports of ongoing projects in Asia including Showboat, a hospital-boat that travelled up and down the Mekong River, and correspondence between Gallagher and the many volunteer doctors working for the Foundation in Laos and Vietnam, including Verne Chaney, Peter Comanduras, and Michael J. Toole. Additionally, this series includes meeting minutes and newsletters from the New York City chapter of the Foundation.

The Administration subseries contains correspondence, meeting minutes, reports, bylaws, handouts, membership lists and Board of Directors lists documenting the activities of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. The materials also include articles of incorporation papers, financial reports, and corporate members meeting minutes. The materials in this subseries date from 1961 to 1970 and are arranged chronologically.

The Correspondence subseries contains correspondence regarding members, directors, doctors, and volunteers, including Teresa Gallagher, Verne Chaney, and Malcolm Dooley, and their roles in the Foundation. The subseries also includes correspondence to and from representatives and doctors at Laos and Vietnam hospitals, such as Khong Island and Ban Houei Sai hospitals, updating the Foundation on hospital, patient, and village statuses. Some correspondence is written in Laotian. The materials in this subseries date from 1960 to 1971 and are arranged chronologically.

The New York City Chapter subseries contains correspondence, meeting minutes, newsletters, and financial reports regarding the management of the Foundation's New York City chapter, of which Gallagher was director. Materials of note include correspondence and agenda booklets for the Foundation's Splendid American Awards Dinner. The materials in this subseries date from 1962 to 1971 and are arranged chronologically.

The Projects subseries contains correspondence, flyers, memoranda, newspaper clippings, proposals, and budgets relating to the projects and programs developed by the Foundation. Projects include Khong Island Showboat, Dooley Kits for Vietnam, an Art Benefit, direct medical relief, and Give a Goat. The materials in this subseries date from 1965 to 1988 and are arranged chronologically.

The Publications subseries contains advertisements, articles, booklets, bulletins, newsletters, and newspaper clippings related to the Foundation's medical work in developing nations and villages. Materials of note include the *Dr. Thomas A. Dooley Foundation News Bulletin* and the *Sawadee Newsletter*, both produced by the Foundation to update viewers on their medical relief efforts in Southeast Asia. The materials in this subseries date from 1960 to 1971 and are arranged chronologically.

Tom Dooley Heritage, Inc.

This series documents the inception and subsequent management of Tom Dooley Heritage, Inc. and contains correspondence, meeting minutes, membership lists, agreements, articles, newspaper clippings, and project overviews. Projects include the Highland Health Center and the Tom Dooley Memorial Hospital in Northern Thailand, near the Myanmar and Laos borders, respectively. Materials of note include correspondence regarding the Heritage's difficulties in getting their incorporation papers signed as well as Gallagher's break with the Thomas A. Dooley Foundation. This series also includes issues of the *Tom Dooley Heritage, Inc. Newsletter*.

The correspondence subseries contains correspondence to and from Teresa Gallagher, volunteer doctors, and residents of the Thailand villages in which the Heritage was present. Subjects include the construction of the Highland Health Center and Tom Dooley Memorial Hospital as well as founding the Heritage. The materials in this subseries date from 1970 to 1986 and are arranged chronologically.

Dr. Thomas A. Dooley Cause

This series contains articles, brochures, journals, correspondence, newsletters, and newspaper clippings relating to Dr. Thomas A. Dooley Cause's mission to canonize Tom Dooley. Materials of note include the *Dr. Thomas A. Dooley Cause Newsletter* which remarks on the legacy Dooley had on the world as well as the deeds of those that uphold that legacy. The materials in this series date from 1959 to 1983 and are arranged chronologically.

Events

This series contains speeches, flyers, and invitations regarding events that Teresa Gallagher attended or held in Tom Dooley's honor. The subjects of the speeches include the Thomas A. Dooley, Medical International Cooperation Organization, and the Thomas A. Dooley Foundation. The materials in this series date from 1960 to 1986 and are arranged chronologically.

Photographs

This series contains photographs of doctors, villagers, and volunteers in Southeast Asia. Also included are photographs of Teresa Gallagher and her family, which were loose photographs from the scrapbook included in the Oversize series. Many of the photographs include letters or newspaper clippings that were originally attached to the photograph to give context behind the image. Some of the photographs contains graphic images of people injured and malnourished as a result of the Vietnam War. The materials in this series date from 1930 to 1971 and are arranged chronologically.

Audio

This series contains audio recordings of radio programs regarding Dooley's life work and posthumous beatification, the Foundation's Executive Committee meetings, and the Heritage's services in Southeast Asia. The audio recordings that include the meetings and a radio program on Dooley's life work were recorded on SoundScriber vinyl and Flexi Disc vinyl, respectively, which SHSMO does not have the ability to play. The other two media types include an audio cassette tape and a reel-to-reel tape. The materials in this series date from 1960 to 1980 and are arranged chronologically.

Books

This series contains five volumes related to Tom Dooley, his achievements, and his legacy. Two volumes are of Dooley's last published book, *The Night They Burned the Mountain*. The other three books include *Beatitude Saints*, *Catholic Digest*, and *Reader's Digest*. The two former books contain articles on Dooley and his humanitarian achievements meant to support his cause for canonization. The later book includes a portion of Dooley's second published book, *The Edge of Tomorrow*. The materials in this series date from 1958 to 1974 and are arranged chronologically.

Oversize

This series contains a sketch of Dooley by Norman Van Trump, A *Life* magazine with an article featuring Dooley, and a scrapbook with photographs and newspaper clippings of Teresa

Gallagher and her family. The materials in this series are date from 1927 to 1965 and are arranged chronologically.

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