

**S0481 Woodall, Viola (1902-),
Papers, 1942-1946
25 Folders**

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Mrs. Viola Woodall donated her papers to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection at the University of Missouri-St. Louis on December 12, 1988. Mrs. Woodall provided information on the Immanuel Church letter-writing effort during World War II to Professor Jerry Cooper of the UM-St. Louis History Department at her home in St. Charles, Missouri on July 23, 1988.

Mrs. Woodall served as the music director of the Immanuel Baptist Church, located on the near north side of St. Louis City, in the 1940s. Her duties included directing the Young Men's choir. When World War II began, many men in the choir joined the armed services or were drafted. In response, Mrs. Woodall organized a group of women from the church to write to the choristers. Most of the correspondents previously had belonged to the choir, and at least two were women in the service.

Each of the "Service Mothers" had a list of men to whom they wrote regularly. The letters attempted to keep the men informed about the activities of the church, to bolster their morale, and to inform them about what was happening to other men in the service. In late 1943 or early 1944, Mrs. Woodall began to compile excerpt items from all the letters sent back to Immanuel Baptist and incorporated them along with church news into a bulletin that was also distributed to correspondents of the Service Mothers' mailing list. Immanuel Baptist Church paid for all postage costs and for printing the bulletin.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The servicemen addressed all letters in this collection to Mrs. Woodall, most of them using the salutation "Mom". Mrs. Woodall was 39 years old in 1941. The largest single set of letters came from her son, Paul Arthur Woodall, usually referred to in the other men's letters as "Artie". The correspondents also frequently mention Mrs. Woodall's other son, Calvin. Calvin remained in St. Louis, employed in defense work, after the Army classified him 4-F, ineligible for the draft due to physical reasons. The GIs primarily wrote about their experiences in the service, their relationships with women and their desires to return home. Only one issue of the Immanuel Baptist church bulletin remains, located in folder 25. The ledger book provides a good overview of the letter-writing effort. It lists the names of each correspondent, the dates of the letters sent and the index is divided into groups by the name of individual service mothers. The collection includes two series: 1. Correspondence, 1942-1946, folders 1-22; 2. Lists and Ledger, 1944-1946, folders 23-24; and 3. Church Bulletin, 1945, folder 25.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

The Correspondence series, folders 1-22, contains the letters written to Viola Woodall from the servicemen. Arranged chronologically by the name of the correspondent.

The Lists and Ledger series, folders 23 and 24, contains a ledger including correspondent names and the dates of each letter sent to Viola Woodall as well as two other Service mothers: Mrs. L. M. Blayney and Mrs. Williams. This series also includes a list of Mrs. L. M. Blayney's correspondent addresses checked in December 1944. The series also contains lists of the servicemen's birthdates, their wives and their wives' addresses.

The Church Bulletin series, folder 25, contains the only extant copy of Armed Service News, the church bulletin of the Immanuel Baptist Church, August 1945. The series also includes the stencil master of the issue, handwritten notes for the bulletin, and a design sketch of the first issue.

FOLDER LIST

SERIES 1 - CORRESPONDENCE, 1942-1946

1. John W. Bibb, 1943-1944
2. Peyton Harris Bibb, 1943-1945
3. Frank Bland, 1944-1945
4. William Dale Boss, 1943-1945
5. Kenneth Brown, 1943-1944
6. Kenneth Brown, 1944
7. Kenneth Brown, 1944
8. Kenneth Brown, 1944-1945
9. James Duncan, 1944-1946
10. V. Edward Duncan, 1944-1945
11. Bill English, 1943-1946
12. Leon Evans, 1943-1945
13. Willis O'Briant, 1944-1945
14. Otho Moutray, 1943-1945
15. Others:
 - Mrs. V. L. Anderson, 1943
 - Clarence Baldwin, 1943-1945
 - Joe Belsford, 1943
 - John Davenport, 1943
 - Edward Diestelkamp, 1942-1943
 - Joe Glaeser, 1945
 - J. R. Hamilton, 1945
 - Robert T. Kracht, 1945
 - Oscar E. Muth, 1943
 - William Roy Schales, 1945
 - Eugene V. Schuler, 1945
 - Earl Scott, 1943
 - Edward J. Thurman, 1945
 - Morris C. Towler, 1942
 - Vernon D. Warden, 1945
 - Bob Watson, 1943
 - Helen Weinder, 1945
 - Marvin Whitener, 1943-1944
16. Raymond Smith, 1943-1944

17. Raymond Smith, 1944-1945
 18. Raymond Smith, 1945
 19. Art Woodall, 1944
 20. Art Woodall, 1944-1945
 21. Art Woodall, 1945
 22. Art Woodall, 1945-1946
- SERIES 2 - LISTS AND LEDGER, 1944-1945
23. Lists, 1944-1945
 24. Ledger, 1944-1946
- SERIES 3 - CHURCH BULLETIN, 1945
25. Armed Services Bulletin, Immanuel Baptist Church Newsletter, 1945

INDEX Armed Service News, f. 25
Baptists, f. 1-25
Immanuel Church, f. 1-25
Voluntarism, f. 1-25
Women In World War II, f. 1-25
Woodall, Viola, f. 1-25
World War II, f. 1-25