

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞
for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ **J. William Myers Papers, 1936-1997** ◀

MSS-127

Size: .2 linear feet

Provenance: Received from J. William Myers, December 1997.

Access: open

Collection Summary: This collection contains legal documents, printed materials, and ephemera related to his work as a poet.

Subjects: [Literature](#), [Religion](#)

Related Collections:

Processing Note:

Copyright: The literary rights to this collection are assumed to rest with the person(s) responsible for the production of the particular items within the collection, or with their heirs or assigns. Researchers bear full legal responsibility for the acquisition to publish from any part of said collection per *Title 17, United States Code*. The **Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections** may reserve the right to intervene as intermediary at its own discretion.

Completed by: Benjamin Grillot, October 1998; last updated: July 2014

**J. William Myers
Papers, 1936-1997**

Biographical Sketch

A poet, minister, and publisher, J. William Myers was born December 1st, 1919 in Huntington, West Virginia, the son of an engraver. At a young age he showed an interest in writing poetry, having his first works published by the Ohio State Journal at age 15. At the age of 17 he joined the National Guard, transferring to the Signal Corps the following year, and finally joining the CCC in 1938.

He received an honorable discharge in 1941, the same year in which his life changed forever. At a meeting later that year he was converted to the Methodist faith. It was an experience that led him into the ministry. The following year, he married his first wife, Nancy Paxton, July 6th, 1942.

In 1948 he was ordained a minister in the Methodist Church. He pursued higher education, first at Ohio Wesleyan University, where he obtained his BA in 1951. Then he continued on in pursuit of a Masters degree at Bowling Green State University, which he completed in 1952 with a thesis on Edgar Allen Poe. He has also attained an honorary STD from Kletzing College (now Vennard College).

Upon graduation he served as a minister in a variety of communities throughout Michigan and Ohio. In 1956 he transferred to the Unitarian Church, the faith with which he would remain the rest of his life. He divorced his wife, Nancy Paxton, in February, 1961.

Alongside his ministry, he continued writing and publishing poetry at an impressive rate. His 1964 book *Green Are My Words* was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. According to Myers however, personal differences with Robert Frost (who was on the prize committee) over the question of whether free verse was poetry, kept him from winning the award.

As a poet, editor, publisher, and printer J. William Myers achieved a level of fame, garnering him entries in *Who's Who in America* and *Contemporary Authors*. He was remarried in 1981 to Helen Fleming, and they reside in Lyons, Ohio.

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Scope and Content Note

The J. William Myers Papers, 1936-1997 are comprised of legal documents (photocopies), newspaper clippings, copies of entries in reference books, books of poetry, a brochure, and a poetry readings booklet.

These papers were too diverse to warrant division into series, so instead five (5) folders were created. [F1] Legal Documents, contains photocopies of important certificates and degrees obtained by Mr. Myers, including his high school and college diplomas. [F2] Printed Materials, newspaper clippings, contains clippings from various newspapers related to Mr. Myers and his work. [F3] Printed Materials, entries in reference books, contains proofs and copies of biographical sketches for such publications as *Contemporary Authors*, and *Who's Who in America*. [F4] Printed Materials, books of poetry, contains copies of books of poetry written by Mr. Myers. [F5] Ephemera, contains various items relating to his life and career, including a brochure and booklets publicizing his books of poetry as well as his poetry readings.

**J. William Myers
Papers, 1936-1997**

Folder List

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Legal Documents, Certificates and Degrees (copies), 1936-1954.
	2	Printed Materials, Newspaper Clippings, 1967-1997 and undated.
	3	Printed Materials, Entries in Reference books, 1996 and undated.
	4	Printed Materials, Books of Poetry, 1963-1991
	5	Ephemera, Business Card, Brochure, Poetry Reading Booklet, 1995 and undated.