

Andrew "Andy" Callahan Collection

Repository: Lawrence History Center

Accession Number: 2017.038

Dates Covered: 1910-2000

Processed by: Christine Lewis and Amita Kiley

Access: Open for Research; Callahan's Purple Heart is not housed with the collection, but LHC staff can retrieve it for viewing

Size: One Document box, one non-standard box

Date Processed: September 2017

Provenance: *Compiled by Christine Lewis*

The Andrew "Andy" Callahan Collection has grown over the years. It began many years ago with Andy's sister, Rita Callahan Shine, lending her scrapbook and some letters to the Lawrence History Center (LHC) to be reproduced for their collection. The collection grew when a plaque that once hung in the old Boston Garden found its way to LHC in 2003. In 2009, Andy Callahan's maternal cousin's son, Robert Crosby, lent LHC their father's scrapbook which highlighted Andy's time in the ring and contained pictures of Andy's trip to Hollywood, CA. Andy and his cousin, also named Robert, spent time with Jimmy Cagney and his brother. It is a well-documented fact that Jimmy Cagney enjoyed hanging around tough guys. One can only imagine what famous Cagney roles were inspired by his time spent with Andy.

In 2017 after giving a talk at the Lawrence Heritage State Park Matinee Movie event which featured one of Edwin Santana's fights and my small Lawrence Boxing Exhibit, I was approached by Rita Callahan Shine's son, Andrew Shine, who asked if I would find a home for his family's Andy Callahan collection, to which I said yes. We are very fortunate to add the following material to the Lawrence History Center collection: Andy's Shamrock green satin boxing shorts, his Purple Heart, two large portraits of Andy in fighting stance, the scrapbook, Andy's war letters sent home, letters from boxer and Lawrencian Arthur Flynn and World Champ boxer Jack Sharkey to Andy's family upon his death in WWII.

Andy Callahan was a local hero who fought hard in the ring and in the trenches. I've heard and read that he had a way with a phrase as well as a way with the ladies. He had incredible stamina that kept him upright in the ring long after his opponents tired. He never forgot his friends in Lawrence, and for many years, they didn't forget him.

Scope and Content: The Collection consists primarily of correspondence, military certificates and documents and scrapbooks. There are two family scrapbooks, one from his maternal cousin's family, the family of Robert Crosby, and the other from Rita Callahan Shine's son, Andrew Shine. The scrapbooks are particularly valuable to researchers as they contain newspaper articles that are not indexed online. Also, included in the collection are letters Callahan sent home to his sister and Lawrence boxing promoter Cy Brown as well as the original telegram reporting Callahan's death in Italy. Two eloquent condolence letters from Arthur Flynn and Jack Sharkey speak to the lost art of penmanship.

Callahan's address book, his green satin boxing shorts complete with shamrock, his Purple Heart, family photos and two boxing portraits make this collection truly unique.

Historical Note: *Compiled by Christine Lewis*

Born in 1910, Andy Callahan came of age in a time and a town where boys were more likely to don boxing gloves than baseball mitts. Callahan became the best fighter to come out of New England in his day (1928-1938). He held three titles simultaneously: New England Lightweight, Middleweight and Welterweight champion. Callahan was afraid of nothing and often met opponents who outweighed him by as much as twenty pounds. He was the first New England boxer to die in WWII. Andy Callahan's status as hometown hero became mythic and for many years Lawrencians would mark the anniversary of his death with solemn dedications and fond newspaper remembrances.

Related Material in LHC Collection: Mayor Lawrence P. LeFebre Papers, 1849-2005, *Sports* subject boxes, *Military – WWII* subject boxes, boxing and military newspaper clippings, LHC photograph collection, LHC library, LHC oral history collection, plaque dedicated to Andrew Callahan

Arrangement:

Document Box Andrew "Andy" Callahan Collection

Folder Title Andy Callahan-Letter to "CY" Wheeler, November 15, 1943

Folder Title Letter from Boxing Confidential Author Jim Brady to Andy Callahan's sister, Rita C. Shine, October 19, 2000

Folder Title Telegram to Andy Callahan's Parents announcing his death, December 7, 1943

Folder Title Andy Callahan's Birth Certificate, August 2, 1910

Folder Title Andy Callahan's letters to family, friends from WWII (Rita Callahan Shine & Cy Wheeler)

Folder Title Condolence Letters from Jack Sharkey and Arthur Flynn after Andy Callahan's death

Folder Title 2011 Friends of Lawrence Public Library Calendar featuring page on Andy Callahan

Folder Title Andy Callahan's family-donated Scrapbook (articles on Lawrence Boxing History)

Folder Title Andy Callahan's War Address Book: contact info for Jack Sharkey, Al Lacy, George Moore

Folder Title Andy Callahan Biography published online on IBRO (International Boxing Research Organization) by Christine Lewis September 21, 2008

Folder Title Obituaries for Lawrencians mentioning Andy Callahan (Tony Previte and Henry Janco)

Folder Title City of Lawrence Gold Star 1946 for Andy Callahan

Folder Title City of Lawrence – Dedication of Memorial to Hero Dead of Second World War, May 29, 1949

Folder Title State Certificate for Andy Callahan's Great Sacrifice

Folder Title Andy Callahan's Purple Heart Certificate

Folder Title Photocopies of Photographs - Original Photos in Vault

Folder Title "Mike Tyson and History's Greatest Knockouts" Video Cassette

Folder Title Cardboard Mailer Addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Callahan/298 Howard Street/Lawrence, Mass. from The Commonwealth of Massachusetts/Treasury Department - Bonus Division

Folder Title Photocopies of Newspaper Articles written about Andy Callahan

Folder Title Copy of Robert Crosby's Scrapbook, Andy Callahan's Cousin on his mother's side

Folder Title Original Citation from President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Grateful Memory of Private Andrew J. Callahan

Non-Standard Box Andrew "Andy" Callahan Collection

- Box contains Callahan's green satin boxing shorts