

**The Filson Historical Society**

**Arrasmith, William Strudwick, 1898-1965  
Papers, 1931-2000**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, contact the Curator  
of Special Collections

**Size of Collection:**

1 cu. ft.

**Location Number:**

Ms. A A773

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**Scope and Content Note**

This collection consists of the personal and family papers of William “Arra” Arrasmith. The majority of the collection consists of correspondence and clippings. The correspondence is written by Arrasmith, his family (mostly his wife, Elizabeth “Betty” (Beam) Arrasmith), researchers, preservationists, and his biographer, Frank Wrenick. The majority of the correspondence is between Elizabeth Arrasmith and various persons interested in her husband’s work. Newspaper clippings document various examples of Arrasmith’s iconic Art Deco Greyhound bus stations, including a Washington D.C. terminal. Clippings also highlight Arrasmith’s involvement with the construction of the pontoon bridge during the 1937 in Louisville flood. Items related to Arrasmith’s military career are also present in this collection, including two World War II diaries and military correspondence related to his service as well as retirement and pension. The research binder of Arrasmith’s biographer, Frank Wrenick, is also included.

**Separation Note**

The collection contained photographs and books that have been removed to The Filson Photograph Collection and Library Collection, respectively. Photographs were photocopied and included in the manuscript collection when related to an item. Books in this collection were *The Streamline Era Greyhound Terminals*, Frank E. Wrenick and *They Called it “Purple Heart Valley”*, Margaret Bourke-White.

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**Biographical Note**

William Strudwick Arrasmith (“Arra”) was born to Thomas and Mary (Strudwick) on July 15, 1898 in Hillsboro, North Carolina. Arrasmith attended the University of North Carolina and later graduated with a Bachelor of Science in architecture from the University of Illinois in 1921. While at Illinois he met his future wife, Elizabeth Beam. The couple had one child, Anne.

In 1922 Arrasmith and his wife moved to Louisville where he formed a partnership with Herman Wischmeyer and began the firm Wischmeyer, Arrasmith, and Elswick in 1929. Their firm was responsible for many notable Louisville structures, including: Federal Land Bank and the Scottish Rite Temple. Prior to this partnership, Arrasmith worked with Fred Morgan, Brinton Davis, and E. T. Hutchings. Later he would join forces with Bill Tyler, forming Arrasmith & Tyler. By 1965 this firm had become Arrasmith & Judd, which later evolved to Arrasmith, Judd, Rapp & Associates. Today (2015), the firm is Arrasmith, Judd, Rapp, Chovan, Inc.

Arrasmith was involved in the ROTC while at Illinois. He was a Captain of the Reserve Corps and commanded a veteran company in 1933. His military and architectural training were utilized during the 1937 Louisville flood when he led a team in the creation of his design for the pontoon bridge that linked Louisville’s downtown with the East End. Arrasmith served with the Army 6<sup>th</sup> Corps Engineers in Europe during World War II and he would later rise to lieutenant colonel in the reserves.

Arrasmith is best known for his iconic Art Deco Greyhound bus stations. He designed more than 60 of these stations, which were located throughout the United States and Canada. The first of these "steamlined" stations was located in Louisville, Ky. and opened on April 28, 1937. Rounded exterior walls divided by a pylon was the characteristic look of the newly designed stations. Nine of these stations are registered on The National Register of Historic Places.

Other commercial projects of Arrasmith’s from the Louisville area include: Methodist Hospital; University of Louisville’s Science Building, Police School, and Medical Apartments; The 800 Apartment Building; Kentucky Fairgrounds; Byck’s Department Store (St. Matthews and 4<sup>th</sup> Street); Kentucky Hotel; and several Western Kentucky University buildings, including their Library. At the time of Arrasmith’s death he was in the process of working on the Baptist Hospital (Kresge Way) and the Patton Museum at Fort Knox. See Folder 11 for a broader listing of Arrasmith’s projects.

Arrasmith was a member of the American Institute of Architects and a registered architect in nearly two dozen U.S. states. He designed the State Board of Examiners and Registration of Architects first official certificate and was awarded Kentucky’s fifth architecture license.

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**Folder List**

- Folder 1: Correspondence, 1931-1934
- Folder 2: Correspondence, 1942-1949
- Folder 3: Correspondence, 1950-1959
- Folder 4: Correspondence, 1978-1979
- Folder 5: Correspondence, 1980-1985
- Folder 6: Correspondence, 1986-1989
- Folder 7: Correspondence, 1990-2000, n.d.
- Volume 8: Diary, 1942
- Folder 9: Diary, 1943
- Folder 10: Business correspondence, 1988-2000
- Folder 11: Business papers, n.d.
- Folder 12: Military papers, 1939-1976
- Folder 13: Poetry and Speeches, 1992, 1943, n.d.
- Folder 14: Clippings, 1937 Flood
- Folder 15: Clippings, Washington D.C. Greyhound Station
- Folder 16: Clippings, Various
- Folder 17: Clippings, Various
- Folder 18: Genealogy, Strudwick and Arrasmith
- Folder 19: Miscellaneous
- Volume 20: Binder of Frank Wrenick's Arrasmith Biography files

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**Added Entries**

Architects - Kentucky - Louisville  
Architects - United States - Biography  
Architecture - Kentucky  
Arrasmith, Elizabeth Beam  
Art deco (Architecture)  
Biography - 20th century  
Bus terminals - United States  
Floods - Kentucky - Louisville  
Greyhound Lines, Inc.  
Historic buildings - Conservation and restoration  
Historic preservation  
Lewis, Anne Arrasmith  
Military spouses - United States  
Preservation and restoration  
Retired military personnel - Pensions - United States.  
World War, 1939-1945  
World War, 1939-1945 - Personal narratives  
World War, 1939-1945 - Italy  
Wrenick, Frank E.