

**Archive  
Lakeshore Museum Center  
Wolfcale/ Trierwieler Letters Finding Aid**

**Collection:** Wolfcale/ Trierwieler Letters

**Object ID Number:** 2012.041.001

**Location:** LCM Archive, Room 204, Shelf N 7

**Dates:** 1945 to 1946

**Quantity:** One archival document box, .5 linear feet

**Restrictions:** No Restrictions

**Abstract:** This collection of archival materials contains 147 letters that James Roy Wolfcale sent his fiancée Dorothy E. Trierwieler over the course of two years. Both James, known as Roy, and Dorothy grew up in Muskegon. Roy enrolled in classes at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor shortly after he was discharged from the Army. While in school, Roy wrote to Dorothy several times a week. The letters in this collection provide researchers with a better understanding of student life right after the Second World War. The letters in this collection also provide a better understanding of relationships, social settings, and what young people experienced in the mid 1940s.

**Historical Information:** James Roy Wolfcale, known as Roy, was born on June 23, 1920, to his parents Orville and Vera. Orville worked as a factory worker and brought his family to Muskegon in 1920. He later worked for West Michigan Steel Foundry Company and Kaydon Engineering Corporation as a mill operator. The Wolfcale family lived in a house at 878 East Forest Avenue. Roy had a younger brother, Kenneth, and a younger sister, Arlene. Roy graduated from high school in Muskegon and on December 10, 1941, he enlisted into the Army. He enlisted at the Jacksonville Army Air Field in Florida, and joined the Army Air Corps. Roy held the rank of Aviation Cadet and served during Second World War (WWII). After the war, he was sent to the Army Navigation School in Texas where he stayed until he was discharged. Roy traveled to Chicago sometime in May or June in 1945, and then he decided to continue his education. By October 1945, Roy was enrolled at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and he was working on his bachelor's degree in architecture.

Dorothy E. Trierwieler was born on April 3, 1921, to her parents Nicholas Mathius and Carrie Oletta Peterson. Her father arrived in Muskegon around 1930 and worked as a caretaker at Muskegon State Park. She had an older sister Carolyn, and the family lived in a house close to Muskegon State Park. Dorothy graduated from high school in Muskegon and worked as a stenographer during WWII. She then worked as a draftsman at Acme Engineering and was later employed with Irwin Tire & Battery Company.

Roy and Dorothy married on June 22, 1946, in Muskegon, and after the wedding Dorothy moved to Ann Arbor while Roy finished school. She worked as an office secretary at the University of Michigan. Roy graduated in 1949 and found employment as a draftsman with the company Bernard J. De Vries. Both Dorothy and Roy lived in Whitehall until 1955 when they moved out of Michigan. In 1958, Roy moved to Miami, Florida to work as an architect. Dorothy died at the age of 45 in 1967, in Fulton County, Georgia.

After Dorothy's death, Roy married Margaret Ogelsby in 1971. Roy died on July 26, 1996, in Tampa, Florida.

**Scope and Contents:** This collection of archival materials is composed of 147 letters all written by James Roy Wolfcale (Roy) to his fiancée Dorothy E. Trierweiler. The letters are organized by year and month. There are two years, 1945 and 1946, each divided into the month in which the letter was written. This collection is divided into the following 11 series: April 1945, June 1945, October 1945, November 1945, December 1945, January 1946, February 1946, March 1946, April 1946, May 1946, and June 1946.

The April 1945 series includes 1 letter postmarked April 18 that Roy wrote from the Army Navigation School in Texas. In the letter he discusses his decision to leave the Army, go into the Reserves, travel to Chicago, and continue his education.

The June 1945 series includes 1 letter postmarked June 1, where Roy discusses how he enjoyed his trip with Dorothy.

The October 1945 series contains 7 letters, and in them Roy writes about Dorothy's visit to Ann Arbor, wishing her luck on her new job, everyday events such as school classes, his plans for getting a house or better housing, his hopes to complete all his classes in three years, his roommate at college, a disagreement he had with a friend, his desire to get married soon, and plans for them to see the football game later that month.

The November 1945 series includes 17 letters where Roy writes about missing Dorothy and her visit to Ann Arbor, how often he thinks about her, his drawing class and his homework from other classes, plans for Thanksgiving, Dorothy's engagement ring and issues such as a crack and how to resize it, details about architecture classes, and a mysterious phone call he received.

The December 1945 series includes 18 letters and in them Roy writes about his class work, Christmas presents and plans, a letter he received from his friend Ronnie that he enclosed, wedding plans and if the ceremony should be non-formal, sickness, popular songs on campus, housing, a book he recommends and teasing her about the book, her being mad about work related issues, and her sending him a subscription to *Esquire* magazine.

The January 1946 series contains 25 letters and Roy discusses the holidays, the housing situation, his desires to get married earlier than they planned, getting back to school after the holiday break, movies he watched at the theater, taxes, finances, the weather, the housing shortage on the campus, getting blood tests as part of marriage plans, his apology for a phone call and their argument, job plans, her plans for visiting, exam results and his grades, and friends he has in the area.

The February 1946 series includes 9 letters where Roy discusses his plans for a summer trip, exams, trying to stop smoking, his friends, movies he saw, and an old girlfriend who moved to Brazil and who called him from that country.

The March 1946 series contains 21 letters and in them Roy writes about his bad experience visiting his parents in Muskegon, how he is feeling lazy, his classes, the number of students enrolled and the number of veterans who are attending school, movies he saw, the wedding planned for June, his report card and exam results, her parents' trip, post-wedding activities (he alludes to sex), a letter he received from Dorothy's mom, wedding plans, marriage lectures at school that he plans on attending, and his anxiety about the wedding.

The April 1946 series includes 17 letters where Roy discusses details for a trip to Chicago that they are planning, car rides to Ann Arbor, his issues with his ink pen, Dorothy's employee/coworker quitting, him reminding her that she will need to let her boss know that she will be leaving her job in Muskegon when they get married, her smoking habit, content from the marriage lecture he attended that included information about contraceptives, sexual practices, feminine issues, and a list of recommended reading that he enclosed, how she might be embarrassed by the content of some of the letters, the weather in Ann Arbor, housing, shopping for his wedding suit, his plans to visit Muskegon, her ring, details about the housing complex in Ann Arbor Willow Village with a floor plan of one of the apartments, marriage physicals, and Dorothy's raise offer at her place of employment.

The May 1946 series contains 20 letters in which Roy writes about Dorothy visit to Ann Arbor, the weather, a photograph of her that was recently taken, how the price of cigarettes increased, wedding plans and who he will ask to be his best man, movies he saw, studying and exams, an art exhibit, his drawings and drawing class, the new grading system at the University of Michigan, how the school is overcrowded, the lack of electricity and gas at the apartment at Willow Village, how they will have to use coal for cooking, how much he enjoyed seeing her, her move to Ann Arbor, a friend's current problem, plans for the honeymoon, his suit for the wedding, and the engagement announcement.

The June 1946 series includes 11 letters and in them Roy writes about the weather, thoughts about calling the Palmer House for a reservation, possibility of PCA for hotel reservations, signing the lease on their new apartment, Dorothy's father's allowing them to use his car, the Edgewater Beach hotel, her new record player, physicals and blood tests, the marriage license, how the apartment will be good enough "as long as we don't have negroes for neighbors" (quote directly from letter), movies, detailed description of the apartment and preparations for moving and decorating, and a radio that Dorothy wanted. The last letter Roy sent to Dorothy was postmarked June 14, 1946.

**Arrangement:** This collection was found at a garage sale in Florida. The original order is not known and thus this collection was arranged in a manner that facilitated easy access. All of the letters were found folded in their original envelopes. All of the letters have been removed from the envelopes, flattened, and stored with the envelope in front of the letter. The date for each letter is on the envelope. There is a sheet of acid free paper in between each letter. Many of the letters are several pages long. Each folder is labeled with the object ID number, collection name, year, and the month in order to provide easy access.

**Contents:**

**Series 1: April 1945**

1 Letter

**Series 2: June 1945**

1 Letter

**Series 3: October 1945**

7 Letters

**Series 4: November 1945**

17 Letters

**Series 5: December 1945**

18 Letters

**Series 6: January 1946**

25 Letters

**Series 7: February 1946**

9 Letters

**Series 8: March 1946**

21 Letters

**Series 9: April 1946**

17 Letters

**Series 10: May 1946**

20 Letters

**Series 11: June 1946**

11 Letters