

McLean County Museum of History

Robert S. Hall Diary Collection

Processed Fall 2023

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1934-1976; 2023
RESTRICTIONS:	FRAGILE: Please use transcriptions and/or scanned printouts instead of original.
PROVENANCE:	The diary was gift of Hall's daughters Holly Schultz, Luanne Negley, and Nancy DeLorge in November 2023.
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

Normal native and lifelong resident Robert S. "Bob" Hall (1915-1976) graduated University High School and later served in the Royal Canadian Air Force. While co-piloting a large British bomber over Belgium in May 1944, his plane was shot down by German craft. He escaped on foot with underground assistance but in a few days was taken by the Gestapo who had infiltrated the underground. Hall spent nearly a year imprisoned in Luftwaffe 7, where he penned most of his diary entries. With Russian troops threatening from the east, the prisoners were death-marched from their southern Poland location to Luckenwalde Germany's Stalag III-A beginning on January 19, 1945. Russian troops liberated Stalag III-A April 22, 1945.

Returning to Normal after the war, Hall wed Agnes Marie Odell in 1947. He operated the Hall Record & Appliances shop and later became a school equipment salesman.

Scope

The collection contains Hall's daily diary covering his POW experiences, a typed transcription, scans of all pages of the diary, newspaper articles and Prairie Aviation Museum exhibit materials on Hall, etc.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Contemporaneous Newspaper Articles & Ads

Pantagraph unless otherwise indicated.

- 1.1 Obituary, Jul 28, 1976.
- 1.2 Copy of page of University High School yearbook, 1934, including headshot of Hall and his autograph.
- 1.3 "They're in the Service," May 13, 1942.
- 1.4 "Robert Hall Visits in Normal," Nov 6, 1942.
- 1.5 "Sgt. R.S. Hall Missing Since Air Action," May 31, 1944. 2pp
- 1.6 "Robert Hall Safe After One Year in Nazi Prison," Jun 1, 1945.
- 1.7 "Robert Hall, Former Prisoner, Visits Normal," Jul 31, 1945.
- 1.8 "Agnes Odell, Robert S. Hall Announce Rites," Jun 20, 1947. Wedding announcement.
- 1.9 Ad: "The New Hoover" at Hall's Records & Appliances, *McLean County Courier*, Sep 1, 1949.
- 1.10 Ad: "Hall's Record Shop in Normal," *McLean County Courier*, Dec 15, 1949.

Folder 2: Prairie Aviation Museum Exhibit Research

- 2.1 Includes scan prints of an array of documents assembled by native Belgian Peter Loncke such as Royal Canadian Air Force documents, photos, POW documents, an interview with an individual who assisted Hall's escape, coverage of exhibit opening, etc.
- 2.2 Brief video of exhibit opening on thumb drive, 2010.

Folder 3: Transcription

- 3.1 Typed typescript of entire diary, 50pp.

Folder 4: Scans of Diary Pages

- 4.1 Printouts of original diary.

Folder 5: Original Diary

- 5.1 Green, YMCA issue diary, 4.75 x 6.75" Fragile: please use transcript & printed scans.

Folder 6: Donor Info

- 6.1 Donor gift agreement, Nov 2023.
- 6.2 Brief notes from donor Luanna Negley.

Folder 7: Published Articles About the Diary

- 7.1 "McHistory: Newly donated World War II diary shares POW experience of Normal resident," WGLT radio, Dec 12, 2023. 8pp.