

Stewart Bell Jr. Archives
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COLLECTION GUIDE

Spottswood Poles Virginia Historic Highway Marker **Collection Number: 1681 WFCHS**

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS: Collection is open to all researchers.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING REPRODUCTION AND USE: Restrictions may apply concerning the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a member of the archives staff for information concerning these restrictions. The user assumes all responsibility for identifying and satisfying any claimants of copyright. Some materials may require special handling.

TECHNICAL ACCESS: This collection contains two oral history interviews. These are available as digital audio files and require a computer to play back. Please consult Archives Staff for assistance in accessing the audio.

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Initial processing took place in June 2016. Last revised September 23, 2023.

EXTENT: 0.21 Linear feet

DATE: 1898-2019

SCOPE AND CONTENT: The Spottswood Poles Virginia Historic Highway Marker collection contains material collected to support an application for a Virginia Historic Highway Marker to honor Spottswood Poles. The application was a joint effort by the City of Winchester, the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, and the Stewart Bell Jr. Archives. The material includes copies of manuscripts, baseball career statistic sheets, census records/city directories, newspaper articles, military records, photographs, vital records, articles and ephemera. Also included are two oral history interviews with Spottswood Poles Sr., and former Winchester Mayor Elizabeth Helm, both of whom discuss memories of Poles.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL: Spottswood Poles was born on November 7, 1886, in Winchester, Virginia. At a young age Poles moved to Harrisburg, PA, where he started his baseball career with the Harrisburg Giants. Poles married Bertha Gibson on September 19, 1905. Midway through his baseball career Poles enlisted in the army in 1917. He fought for the 93rd Division of the 369th Infantry of the U.S. Army and he served in France. He returned home in 1919 with five battle stars and a Purple Heart while gaining the rank of sergeant. Once he returned, he went back to playing baseball.

Poles retired from baseball in 1923 with an outstanding batting average of .309 and 160+ stolen bases. After his retirement Poles held many jobs including chauffer, mechanic, and baseball manager. On September 12, 1962, Spottswood Poles died of cancer at age 75, at the VA Hospital in Lebanon, PA. Poles was buried at Arlington Cemetery at section 42, site 2324.

In April 2020, the City of Winchester erected a historic marker at 502 N. Kent Street near the site of Poles's birthplace. In 2019, the City renamed a street near the baseball fields at Jim Barnett Park in Winchester for Poles.

RELATED MATERIAL: Ellsworth Turner Collection, 204 THL; Black History Task Force Collection, 1786 THL

IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Archives staff collected materials in this collection to support the application for placement of a historic marker near Poles's birthplace.

ORGANIZATION:

BOX 1

Application, Virginia Historic Highway Marker

Baseball Career

Census Records/ City Directory Excerpts

Events

Oral History Interviews

Reid Poles Sr. and Reid Poles Jr. Interview Transcript, 6-21-2019

Elizabeth Helms Interview Transcript, 5-30-2019

Reid Poles Sr. and Reid Poles Jr. Interview Questions

* Audio files of these interviews are available to researchers. Please ask staff for assistance.

Military Records

News Articles

Vital Records

PHOTOGRAPHS – filed with collection.

Location of Originals: Unknown. All images are copies.

1681-01 Spottswood Poles and wife Bertha, c. 1900

1681-02a Spottswood Poles, outfield, undated

1681-02b Spottswood Poles, with baseball bat, c. 1910s

1681-02c Spottswood Poles, with baseball team, undated

1681-03 Spottswood Poles, World War I, c. 1917-18