

ArMs 1989.007  
4 Boxes: 2 RC,  
1 FF, 1 OS  
(3.5 cubic feet)  
4C-4.2.C and 4.5.E

Thomas N. Schroth and  
Raymond A. Schroth, S.J.  
*Brooklyn Eagle* Collection  
1841-1976  
(Bulk dates: 1952-1955)

Brooklyn Historical Society  
Othmer Library  
128 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel. 718.222.4111 FAX 718.222.3794

[library@brooklynhistory.org](mailto:library@brooklynhistory.org)  
[www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org)

Ilaria Papini  
September-October, 2007  
Marilyn H. Pettit / Leilani Dawson

## Introduction

This collection contains the records belonging to the last managing editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle* (formerly *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*), Thomas N. Schroth, the son of its last publisher and editor, Frank D. Schroth. While the inclusive dates span from 1841 to 1976, the bulk of Thomas Schroth's records cover the final days of the *Eagle* (1952-1955), the period leading up to and culminating in a Newspaper Guild strike that led to the closing of the newspaper. The labor struggle is documented through newspaper clippings, internal memos, Newspaper Guild meeting bulletins and correspondence. A smaller portion of the collection is comprised of the papers of Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., first cousin to Thomas Schroth, and contains the notes for his doctoral dissertation in history at George Washington University on the *Eagle*, subsequently published as *The Eagle and Brooklyn* (1974). Raymond's papers cover his correspondence with publishers, his notes, early drafts of the dissertation and portions of drafts of the book as well as reviews and correspondence with respondents to an author's query he had published. The entire collection is housed in four boxes overall, and is accessioned as 1989.007. There are no restrictions on its use.

## Provenance

Father Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., donated this collection to the Brooklyn Historical Society in 1989 (Accession 1989.007) on behalf of his cousin, Thomas N. Schroth, the last managing editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*. Thomas Schroth's collection contained his records of the final years leading to the dissolution of the newspaper following a labor dispute and strike, 1952-1955. Added to Thomas Schroth's collection were materials belonging to his cousin Raymond, comprising his research notes and various portions of drafts in different phases of completion of his Ph.D. dissertation, later published as *The Eagle and Brooklyn*, 1974. Notes in the accession file specify that the collection belonged to and was being officially donated by Thomas Schroth though transferred by Raymond Schroth.

## Historical Note

The *Brooklyn Eagle* (formerly *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*) began publication in 1841 under the direction of its founder, Isaac van Anden, and was at least in part meant to be an organ of the Democratic Party as it then existed (Box 1:29). Over the years the *Eagle* enjoyed a steadily growing popularity and became the largest Brooklyn paper as it gradually absorbed several other Brooklyn dailies, the main holdout being the *Brooklyn Citizen*. Though devoted to chronicling the news of Brooklyn, the *Eagle* published national and international news as well, making it widely read in most of the English-speaking world (Box 1:29). The paper promoted a highly defined Brooklyn identity, encouraging citizens to consider themselves Brooklynites first and New Yorkers second.

Over time, the *Eagle* boasted many prominent figures among its editorial staff. Walt Whitman (Editor, 1846-1848) was among them, as well as Thomas Kinsella (Editor, 1861-1884). Henry Cruse Murphy, one of the founders of the *Eagle*, went on to become mayor of Brooklyn in 1842. The *Eagle* was not shy in expressing its dissent during consolidation with New York in 1898, and years later published a study on Brooklyn's relationship with New York, again recommending secession from the greater metropolitan area (Box 1:8).

The beginning of the Civil War brought a remarkable increase in sales to the *Eagle*. The continuation of the war created tension between the paper and the Union, as the *Eagle* was outspoken in its support of the Confederate states. The paper fought for its right to freedom of speech during a grand jury inquiry, avoiding an indictment, but the postmaster general banned the *Eagle* from the mail for the remainder of the conflict.

Thomas Kinsella was responsible for a number of technological advances at the *Eagle* during his tenure as editor. These improvements made the *Eagle* very competitive. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were a time of steady growth for the paper, whose reputation spread to the entire English-speaking world. The *Eagle* had foreign offices in Paris and London.

Beginning with the Depression in 1929 and throughout the 1930s, the *Eagle* experienced a slow decline in circulation, caused in part by the consequences of the Depression itself and some unwise investments and technological improvements that crippled the paper's finances. Finally, with the birth of the American Newspaper Guild in 1933, the subsequent Guild unit at the *Eagle* became an active adversary in labor negotiations. There was a first Guild strike in 1937, during which the *Eagle* was able to continue publishing. The strike did damage the finances, however, and the paper was put up for sale at a bankruptcy auction. Guild activity was quiescent during World War II but resumed at the end of the war.

Frank D. Schroth purchased the *Eagle* in 1938 and became its last publisher. Frank Schroth gave the paper a more modern imprint and injected renewed vigor into the community sentiment that the *Eagle* was famous for fostering. Frank Schroth brought his sons into the company, assigning the post of Assistant Publisher to Frank D. Schroth, Jr. and that of Managing Editor to Thomas N. Schroth. Under the management of the Schroth family the *Eagle's* circulation increased and advertising revenues were strong for several years. Nevertheless, labor disputes continued to flare up, the Guild's position being that if management wanted the *Eagle* to compete with the major New York papers, it must pay equivalent salaries as well. The situation came to a head in early 1955 when the Guild called a strike on January 28. During the strike of 1937 the *Eagle* had been able to continue publishing because the mechanics and printers had reported to work in spite of the picket line. This time things were different: no one crossed the line, and for the first time in 114 years the *Eagle* was unable to publish. The strike lasted forty-seven days, and Frank Schroth was ultimately forced to close the paper down<sup>1</sup>. In spite of a vehement campaign in the press and petitions from the readers bemoaning the loss of "The Voice of Brooklyn," the *Eagle* was permanently closed and its assets sold at public auction. There were two attempts at reviving the paper in the early 1960s, and the 1970s witnessed the birth of several vital new local newspapers, including the *Phoenix*, the publication of which coincided with Brooklyn's brownstone revival and community invigoration. Dozier Hasty, owner and publisher of the *Brooklyn Heights Press*, purchased the *Eagle's* name and logo and began in 1996 to publish a new *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* as a daily newspaper except on Sundays.

Thomas N. Schroth was one of Frank D. Schroth's four children. Tom, as his byline read, wrote extensively for the paper over the years. One of his popular columns was called *City Hall Slants*, and commented on the goings on in the administrative offices of the city of Brooklyn. The bulk of this collection belongs to him, and is full of handwritten notes in his generous hand on all aspects of the management of the newspaper, from calculating wages to the rules of style in writing.

Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., born 1933, was Tom's first cousin and a Jesuit priest. He attended George Washington University and earned a Ph.D. in U.S. history with a dissertation on the *Brooklyn Eagle* and its relationship to the city of Brooklyn, which he defended in 1971. Since then Father Schroth has gone on to publish several books, most on the history of the Society of Jesus and other Catholic themes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Schroth, R.A. (1974). *The Eagle and Brooklyn: a community newspaper, 1841-1955*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, p. 245.

## Scope and Content

The collection consists of 3.5 cubic feet of materials comprising the Thomas N. Schroth and Raymond A. Schroth, S.J. *Brooklyn Eagle* Collection, 1841-1976 (bulk dates: 1952-1955). The collection is housed in four boxes total: two record containers, one oversized box and one flat file box, and is arranged in two series:

- I. Thomas N. Schroth *Brooklyn Eagle* Records, 1841-1971;
- II. Raymond A. Schroth, S.J. *Eagle and Brooklyn Papers*, 1938-1976.

The individual items in this collection range from very poor to good condition.

Series I, Thomas N. Schroth *Brooklyn Eagle* Records, 1841-1971, contains the papers and records of Thomas Schroth, the last managing editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*. The materials include scrapbooks, bound first and centennial issues, photographs (OS 4:43, RC Box 2:57) and *Eagle* publications such as pamphlets and booklets. The bulk of this series is comprised of materials documenting the protracted labor struggle between newspaper management and the *Eagle* unit of the Newspaper Guild during the years 1952-1955, consisting mainly of correspondence, internal memos, clippings, Newspaper Guild publications, Guild meeting bulletins and union contracts. The condition of the items in this series ranges from very poor (clippings and typescripts on poor quality paper) to good (the more recent materials and all correspondence on onionskin paper). Folders are arranged in alphabetical order by subject, some folder titles having been assigned by the processor.

Series II, Raymond A. Schroth, S.J. *Eagle and Brooklyn Papers*, 1938-1976, is largely comprised of manuscript and typescript notes written by Raymond Schroth during the preparation of his dissertation in History, later edited and made into a book with the title *The Eagle and Brooklyn*. Other materials in these papers include clippings, correspondence and some college papers. The condition of the items in this series is for the most part good, though there are some clippings that would benefit from being copied.

## Processing Note

The collection was originally delivered to the Brooklyn Historical Society in two record cartons and one oversized box. The materials were divided into letter-sized folders that were assigned titles, but no series were identified. As the files clearly belonged to two separate people, each group having been created and assembled in two distinct time periods, they were divided accordingly into two series, re-housed in legal-sized folders and new boxes, and the materials in the oversized box divided due to size and preservation issues. Some materials in need of preservation were appropriately wrapped and re-housed. The resulting collection is comprised of two record cartons, one oversized box and one flat file box.

A small number of folders in the collection required attribution. These folders are:

- A folder containing clippings, an essay and pamphlets on the *Eagle's* history spanning dates 1940-1973, which was attributed to Raymond Schroth's collection and titled "History, 1940-1973 and undated;"
- A folder containing a single *New York Times* clipping on the development of Brooklyn, dated 1969, which was attributed to Raymond Schroth's collection was discarded and the clipping was absorbed into the folder titled "Brooklyn – clippings, 1969-1973;"
- A folder containing a single clipping on Walt Whitman as editor of the *Eagle*, dated 1971, which was attributed to Raymond Schroth's collection and titled "Whitman, Walt – clipping, 1971;"

- A folder containing obituary notices of former *Eagle* employees, dated 1974-1975 and undated, which was attributed to Raymond Schroth's collection and titled "Obituary notices of former Brooklyn Eagle employees, clippings, 1974-1975 and undated;"
- A folder containing a journalism school paper on Lincoln's assassination, dated 1971, which was attributed to Raymond Schroth's collection and titled "*Comparisons of the Editorials on Abraham Lincoln's Assassination* [sic] in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle and The New York Daily Tribune – college paper, 1971;"
- A folder containing a journalism school paper on Benjamin Wood, undated, which was attributed to Raymond Schroth's collection and titled "*The New York Copperhead Press: Benjamin Wood and the Daily News* – college paper."

### Related Material

- *Brooklyn Eagle Records, 1841-1955*. Brooklyn Historical Society (ArMs 1977.226)
- Schroth, R.A. (1974). *The Eagle and Brooklyn: a community newspaper, 1841-1955*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- *American Newspaper Guild Records, 1933-1969*. American Newspaper Guild Collection, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and the *Brooklyn Eagle* are widely available on microfilm, but the indices are limited and are available only in hard copy. The Brooklyn Public Library acquired the *Eagle's* "morgue" (clippings library) in 1957 from Frank Schroth, together with all the records of the paper. The library has created a collection called the Brooklyn Collection, for which the *Eagle* materials form the chief source of information. Brooklyn Public then embarked on a digitization project, and so far the microfilm of the *Eagle* from 1841 to 1902 has been digitized and can be found online at:

- Brooklyn Public Library, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* online! 1841-1902. Retrieved October 22, 2007, from Historic newspaper: *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (1841-1902) Web site: <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/>

### Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1 Arbitration award	1955-1959 and undated
	2 Auction sale	1955
	3 <i>Battle of Long Island</i>	1951
	4 Beating of gas station owner by off-duty cop – clippings	1954
4	5 <i>Brooklyn Daily Eagle</i> 97 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary section (2 copies)	1937
	6 <i>Brooklyn Daily Eagle</i> Centennial Edition, 1841-1941	1841-1941
1	7 <i>Brooklyn Eagle Management's Bulletins 1954-1955</i>	1954-1955
	<i>Guild Negotiations</i> – binders	
	8 <i>Brooklyn's Relationship to the City of New York</i>	1942
	9 Bulletins	1954-1955
	10 Centennial – promotional file folder	1941
	11 Circulation problems of newspapers – clippings	1953-1967
	12 Circulation statistics of New York newspapers	1954
	13 <i>City Hall Slants</i> – Tom Schroth column, clippings	1948 and undated
	14 Closing of the newspaper	1955-1959 and undated
	15 Communist Party unit publications (including <i>Eagle Eye</i> )	1938-1939 and undated
	16 <i>A decade under the Guild 1937-1947</i> (3 copies)	undated
	17 <i>Eagle Reporter</i>	1941-1955
	18 Editorial payroll schedule	1954

19	Failed negotiations with <i>Herald Tribune</i> – flyer	undated
20	Financial calculations	undated
21	Financial difficulties <i>Brooklyn Eagle</i> and other papers, clippings	1954-1955
22	Financials	1953-1954
23	Front pages 1841-1955 (copies)	circa 1950's, undated
24	<i>The Guild Reporter</i>	1949-1955
25	Guild unit and Communist Party	1938-1955 and undated
26	Hamilton, Maxwell – ¼ inch audio tape reel	undated
27	Harding, Earl – articles	1955
28	History	1954 and undated
29	<i>The History of the Brooklyn Eagle 1841-1955</i> (2 copies) and goodwill statement	undated
30	<i>How a Modern Newspaper is Made</i>	circa 1911, undated
31	Issues of the newspaper	1954-1963
32	Labor relations	undated
33	Labor relations	1941-1962 and undated
34	Labor relations and arbitration	1947-1954
35	Labor relations – memos	1955 and undated
4	36 Last issue Jan. 28, 1955	1955
1	37 Library	1946-1951 and undated
	38 Liquidation	1955
	39 Martin, Dudley – file on <i>Brooklyn Eagle</i>	1935-1969 and undated
	40 News policies and direction for <i>Brooklyn Eagle</i> 1950s	1949-1954 and undated
	41 Newspapers other than <i>Brooklyn Eagle</i> – clippings	1960-1962
	42 <i>Newsroom Handbook</i>	1919
4	43 Photographs	undated
2	44 Physicians Guild speech – A.S. Roscoe	1955
	45 Pulitzer Prize 1951 – advertising poster	1951
	46 Revival of <i>Brooklyn Eagle</i> and labor relations	1952-1955 and undated
	47 Sale	1955
	48 Schroth, Frank – letters and talks	1940-1971
	49 Schroth, Frank – tributes	1940-1971
	50 Schroth, Thomas – correspondence	1952-1955
	51 Schroth, Thomas – correspondence and papers	1950-1955
	52 Schroth, Thomas – talks	1951-1954 and undated
	53 Schroths – sympathy correspondence	1955
3	54 Scrapbook, “Newspaper Comments Concerning the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the <i>Brooklyn Daily Eagle</i> ”	1916
4	55 Scrapbook, “Newspaper Comments, Letters, etc., Concerning the Eighty-fifth Anniversary of the <i>Brooklyn Daily Eagle</i> ”	1926
2	56 <i>The Story of the Chicago Crime Commission</i>	1950
	57 Strike (contains photo)	1947-1955 and undated
	58 Strike – history, untitled (2 copies) and correspondence	1955-1958
	59 Strike – insurance	1955-1958
	60 Strike – memos	1954-1955
	61 Strike – memos, notes, clippings, etc.	1954-1955
	62 Strike – notes	1954-1955
	63 Union contracts	1940-1954
	64 World Series	1952-1953

**Series II: Raymond A. Schroth, S.J. *Eagle and Brooklyn Papers 1938-1976* (bulk dates 1970-1973)**

2	1	Brooklyn – clippings	1969-1973
	2	<i>Comparisons of the Editorials on Abraham Lincoln's</i>	1971

	<i>Assasination [sic] in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle and The New York Daily Tribune – college paper</i>	
3	Correspondence with respondents to query	1970-1971
4	Dissertation proposal	1969-1971
5	<i>The Eagle and Brooklyn</i> – manuscript and notes	undated
6	<i>The Eagle and Brooklyn</i> – notes	1973 and undated
7	<i>The Eagle and Brooklyn</i> – notes and manuscript	undated
8	<i>The Eagle and Brooklyn</i> – notes from Rita Ciolli	1973
9	<i>The Eagle and Brooklyn</i> – publication	1972-1974
10	<i>The Eagle and Brooklyn</i> – reviews and responses	1974-1976
11	<i>The Eagle and Brooklyn</i> – typescript	undated
12	History	1940-1973 and undated
13	History – correspondence with respondents to query	1970
14	Kaltenborn, H. V.	1970
15	<i>The New York Copperhead Press: Benjamin Wood and the Daily News</i> – college paper	undated
16	Obituary notices of former <i>Brooklyn Eagle</i> employees, clippings	1974-1975 and undated
17	Schroth, Frank D.	1938-1973 and undated
18	Whitman, Walt – clipping	1971

### Access Points

#### Names – Individuals:

Schroth, Thomas N.

Schroth, Frank D.

Schroth, Frank D., Jr.

Schroth, Raymond A. – (LCNAF)<sup>2</sup>

#### Names – Corporate:

Brooklyn Daily Eagle (LCNAF)

Brooklyn Eagle (LCNAF)

American Newspaper Guild (LCNAF)

American Society of Newspaper Editors (LCNAF)

#### Subject Headings:

Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)—Newspapers. (LCSH)<sup>3</sup>

New York (N.Y.)—Newspapers. (LCSH)

Newspaper employees—New York (State)—New York. (LCSH)

Labor relations—History—New York. (LCSH)

Newspapers—History—20<sup>th</sup> century. (LCSH)

Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)—Social life and customs—20th century. (LCSH)

#### Form/Genre:

Clippings (LCSH)

Correspondence (LCSH)

Memorandums (LCSH)

Newspapers (LCSH)

Publications (LCSH)

Scrapbooks

<sup>2</sup> LCNAF – Library of Congress Name Authority File.

<sup>3</sup> LCSH – Library of Congress Subject Headings.