

# BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

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## Harry Saxton

*[Archive]: 1100 World War II Letters*

\$3500



A collection of approximately 1100 letters between Harry Saxton and his wife, Mary Ann, while he was fighting during World War II. All items near fine with modest age toning and tears from opening and housed in a wooden box with a broken lid which reads, "To- Mary Ann Saxton, Washburn St." with a "passed by Army Examiner" stamp on it. An extensive archive detailing the war for one couple.

A year and a half after the United States entered World War II, Harry Saxton of Leicester, Massachusetts, born 1913, enlisted in the armed forces at the age of 30. After a brief stay at Camp Davis in North Carolina in 1943, he spent time in South Africa until the summer of 1944, after which he was stationed in Ghedi, Italy, until his discharge from service in October of 1945.

While away from his home, Saxton wrote to his wife nearly every day, and sometimes twice a day. In the letters, which vary in length from a short brief note to nine pages in length, he describes the scenery of his stay, his adventures in foreign countries, and the state of affairs on his base.

The letters are poignant and depict the harsh reality of being separated by the War. In one letter dated January 31, 1944 Saxton writes asking, “Well Mary- do you still love me as usual or are you trying to sort of forget me a bit and just go along hoping that someday we can resume our once happy lives. Right now I know it isn’t a very happy one but I guess it was meant to be that way and there is nothing we can do about it now.” Later in May of the same year Saxton writes a very sad letter describing “sunny Italy” and the Italian people who wait with buckets outside of US camps for food. Saxton describes the children who beg for food, describing the desolate Italian area around him.

His wife, back home raising their young daughter, writes to him with much the same frequency - nearly every day. She writes of the domestic front, the struggle of raising a child alone, the loneliness she experiences, her daily routines, and her social life.



One year after D-Day, on June 6th, 1945, he writes, “Today is just 1 year since the invasion of France. How well I recall that day - our own troops in Italy had recently taken Rome and we were camped on the outskirts [...] The next morning we pushed off into Rome and pitched camp on the other side of the city to the North. Then came night after night of one air raid after another. I still sit in Italy, at least no bullets or enemy planes are coming at us.”

Among the most notable characteristics about this archive - aside from its voluminous nature - are Mr. Saxton’s doodles interspersed throughout his letters. Often funny, he draws his wife with a double chin, captioning the doodle with “Is this you now?” He adds, “Oh well don’t worry babe I’ll still love you at 200 lbs so don’t lose hope.” Then he writes about reminding her to watch her calories, he signs off the letter letting her know that he is getting buff and remains handsome.

A massive accumulation of both sides of a couple’s correspondence during World War II detailing their experiences.  
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