

# Guide to the Ryser Family Papers, 1923-1983

Last Modified on 10/28/2021 3:42 pm CDT

## Summary Information

**Title:** Ryser Family Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** 1923-1983

**Creator:** Ryser Family

**Call Number:** Eau Claire Mss BZ

**Quantity:** 0.8 c.f. (2 archives boxes and 1 flat box)

**Repository:** Housed at the Area Research Center, William D. McIntyre Library, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society, Library-Archives Division

**Archival Locations:** UW-Eau Claire McIntyre Library / Eau Claire Area Research Ctr.

**Abstract:** Papers of a family that emigrated from Switzerland to a farm near Eau Claire, Wisconsin about 1923. Included is correspondence to Bertha Amacher Ryser from friends and family in Oberried, Switzerland (all in German and mainly 1970s and 1980s) and elsewhere; many letters written by her son Werner H. Ryser during his service with the 120th Engineers Combat Battalion during the Korean War; and personal expense books, diaries, and a farm account book, 1943-1944.

**Language:** English, German

## Search Terms/Subject Terms

- Korean War, 1950-1953—Personal narratives, American
- Swiss Americans—Wisconsin
- Switzerland
- Ryser, Bertha, 1893-1983
- Ryser, Werner H., 1928-

# Biography/History

The Ryser Family settled near Eau Claire, Wisconsin during the early 1920's. Bertha Amacher Ryser, the matriarch of the family, was born on April 13, 1893. She arrived from Oberried in 1923 to join her husband Albert who had emigrated previously. Their daughter Albertina was born in 1924 and a second daughter Hilda Margaret was born in 1927; their son Werner Henry was born in 1928.

Albertina served in the Women's Air Corps during World War II and in 1947 married Gordon Sorkness. Their children were Rita and Gregory.

Werner Ryser served in the Army during the Korean War, after which he settled in Milwaukee where he was employed in factory work with Evinrude Motors.

Bertha Ryser died in 1983.

## Scope and Content Note

This small family collection primarily documents two generations of a family of twentieth century Swiss immigrants. Except for a few miscellaneous items, the papers date entirely from the post-World War II period, but a hint of the family's early experiences can be inferred from Bertha's difficulty with the English language in a few of her letters to her son, 1948-1950.

The largest portion of the collection is the papers of Bertha Ryser, and it consists of correspondence, personal expense books, 1958-1983, diaries, 1967-1983, tax records, 1971-1980, and a farm ledger, 1943-1944. This correspondence is primarily comprised of letters from her son Werner just prior to and during his service in the Korean War; from her sister Magdalena Ruef, 1968-1973; and from Marti Trachel-Fluck, who is thought to be a girlhood friend from Oberried. The letters from Werner primarily concern the details of training, and road and bridge construction in California, Japan, and Korea. The letters from Bertha's friends and family in Switzerland are written in German. They primarily concern health, travel, and the details of daily life. Also part of Bertha's papers is a file of handwritten drafts of her outgoing German language correspondence. These drafts, as well as her diaries which are also in German, indicate some difficulty with standard written German.

The collection also includes a folder of correspondence received by Werner. These are primarily letters from the late 1940's when he was working first as an agricultural laborer in the West and then in an automobile factory in Pontiac, Michigan. The collection also includes a folder of correspondence received by George Knudtson, a friend of Werner Ryser, while they were both working in Pontiac, Michigan during 1947 and 1948. It is not known why these letters are part of the Ryser collection.

## Administrative/Restriction Information

## Acquisition Information

Presented by Rita Sorkness, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. September 17, 1986. Accession Number: M90-

## Contents List

Box/Folder 1/1	Knudtson, George, 1947-1948
	Ryser, Bertha
Box/Folder 1/2	Amacher, Peter, 1977-1982
Box/Folder 1/3	Expense books, 1958-1966
Box/Folder 1/4-5	Expense books/diaries, 1967-1983
Box 3	Farm account book, 1943-1944
Box/Folder 2/6	Memorabilia, 1923-1980
Box/Folder 2/7	Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. George, 1979-1982
Box/Folder 2/8	Outgoing correspondence drafts, 1978-1983, undated
Box/Folder 2/9	Ruef, Magdalena, 1968-1973
	Ryser, Werner
Box/Folder 2/10	To, 1948-1950
Box/Folder 2/11-12	From, 1948-1952, undated
Box/Folder 2/1	Sorkness, Albertina and Rita, 1967-1982, undated
Box/Folder 2/2	Tax forms, 1971-1980
Box/Folder 2/3	Trachel-Fluck, Marti, 1979-1983
Box/Folder 2/4	Ryser, Werner, 1948-1952