

1 cu. ft.
(1 record carton)
Accessions 2004.003
and 1997.471

The
Walter O'Malley/
Brooklyn Dodgers
Collection
1946-57

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Introduction

This collection of documents and news clippings is a selected portion of the papers of former Brooklyn National League Baseball Club (Brooklyn Dodgers) President, Walter O'Malley. The bulk of the collection comprises correspondence and memoranda from 1946-57, covering the period of O'Malley's roles as counsel to, and vice president of, the Brooklyn Dodgers, and afterward his ascension to the presidency of the organization in 1950.

The collection chiefly relates to the Dodgers' efforts to secure a site and build a new stadium in Brooklyn to replace Ebbets Field, and failing to do so, the team's move to Los Angeles in 1957. Included in these records is correspondence with such notable figures as city construction coordinator Robert Moses, Mayor Robert F. Wagner, New York State Governor Averell Harriman, Brooklyn Borough President John Cashmore, and architect/engineer Buckminster Fuller. A noteworthy artifact is a Brooklyn Dodgers banner that flew over Ebbets Field in 1955, the year of the Dodgers' World Series victory.

There are no restrictions on the collection, which includes a number of documents selected and available for viewing on the Walter O'Malley website, www.walteromalley.com.

Provenance

The collection was accessioned in two parts in 1995 and 2004 (Accessions 1997.471 and 2004.003). Both accessions were donated by Peter O'Malley, Walter O'Malley's son.

Processing Note

Documents had been placed in *tyvek* envelopes in very rough chronological order, while items that had been scanned and posted on the Walter O'Malley website were encased in plastic sheets and placed in a separate notebook and envelope. Many of the documents have a "stadium" or "new stadium" filing designation at the top, presumably hand-written by either O'Malley or a secretary. All records have now been refoldered into fourteen acid-free folders, with all staples and metal clips removed. The folders are placed in chronological order, as are the documents within each folder. The plastic-encased records have been interfiled with the other O'Malley correspondence, as were copies of correspondence between third parties, reports from various bodies, and other records relating to the stadium. A list of notable correspondents is appended to the container list.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of correspondence, memoranda, and reports, chiefly typewritten, some original letters and many carbon copies as typed by office staff. Other items include stadium plans, city committee and consulting engineers' reports, press releases, and clippings from New York City and Brooklyn newspapers that cover the 1946-57 period. The collection is arranged in chronological order.

Folder 1 contains records from 1946-48, during O'Malley's tenure as counsel to and vice president of the team. Correspondence between O'Malley and then-Dodgers president Branch Rickey with civil engineer Emil F. Praeger and designer Norman Bel Geddes signalled the desire as early as 1946, immediately after the end of World War II, to either increase the seating capacity of Ebbets Field or move to a new, larger stadium. Contents of Folder 2 show efforts continuing into the early 1950's, with needs for a car park emerging as an issue as it perhaps became clearer that some baseball fans

could and would drive to the stadium rather than use public transportation. Correspondence between O'Malley and Robert Moses, then chairman of the City of New York Office of Committee on Slum Clearance, introduced discussion of land acquisition at various possible sites. A letter from Moses to O'Malley in this folder, dated November 2, 1953, commented sharply and dismissively on a plan to merge stadium planning with a "Title I Slum Clearance Project" in Brooklyn's Fort Greene neighborhood.

The first mention of a possible move to Los Angeles occurred in a 1954 letter (Folder 3) between O'Malley and Frank D. Schroth of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* but also mentions the initiation of talks and design plans relating to a proposed new Long Island Railroad Terminal on Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues in downtown Brooklyn, and the possibility of building a new Dodgers stadium over the station. Many of the 1955 records in Folder 4 relate to this site, including O'Malley's May 26, 1955 letter to Buckminster Fuller regarding the possibility of designing a domed stadium, further correspondence with Robert Moses and with Brooklyn Borough President John Cashmore, and a telegram from Cashmore to New York City Mayor Robert F. Wagner touching on the railroad terminal plans. A number of documents in Folders 5 and 6 relate to the creation in 1956 of the Brooklyn Sports Center Authority to oversee the development of the LIRR stadium site. Correspondence regarding approval of this administrative entity flew between various public officials, including Moses, Cashmore, Wagner, and Governor Averill Harriman. Note that 2004 plans have been brought forward to build a sports arena in the very same location, the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues in downtown Brooklyn.

Records indicating that the firm of Madigan & Hyland was hired to do a feasibility study are found in Folder 7, along with several file memoranda about events. Items of particular note are a letter from one R. Cucco to Mayor Wagner, dated February 27, 1957, stating, among other sentiments, "I pay your salary. I WANT THE DODGERS IN BROOKLYN," and a March 1, 1957 telegram from Wagner to O'Malley promising to do his best to keep the team in Brooklyn. A file memorandum of April 11, 1957 (Folder 8) described a meeting with Moses in which Moses stated that "political apathy" had doomed the Atlantic & Flatbush LIRR project. During that meeting a Flushing Meadow Park stadium site was discussed as a possibility. Also in Folder 8 is an invitation to a luncheon for the "Keep the Dodgers in Brooklyn Committee."

Madigan-Hyland's August 1957 report (Folder 9) estimated total stadium costs at around \$20 million, of which Dodger management indicated willingness to fund \$5 million, and was followed by a series of documents, including press releases, a telegram of imploring tone from Cashmore to O'Malley, and a hard-edged letter from Moses to city corporation counsel Peter Campbell Brown (F. 9) noting that the proposed Atlantic Avenue stadium site was a "dead" issue. The announcement of the Dodgers' departure from Brooklyn was dated October 8, 1957.

Placed in Folder 10 is a 1954 letter from a boy who signed himself "Roddie Rose, 12 years old," sent to ball club president O'Malley; "*We don't want the Dodgers to move from Brooklyn.*" The letter and O'Malley's response are in Folder 10 and copies of letters written by O'Malley's secretary in response to correspondents advocating for new stadium sites are in Folder 11. The collection also contains some correspondence from the offices of Dodgers vice president E. J. "Buzzy" Bavasi and assistant general manager Arthur E. Patterson from 1956-57 (Folder 12).

News clippings were placed in folders and envelopes, and are here foldered separately but should be photocopied for preservation. Several publications are present in Folders 20 and 21.

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	1	Office of Counsel and Vice President Walter O'Malley-Correspondence	1946-48
	2	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	1951-53
	3	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	1954
	4	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	1955
	5	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	Jan.-Apr. 1956

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	6	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	May-Oct. 1956
	7	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	Nov. 1956-March 1957
	8	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	Apr.-July 1957
	9	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence	Aug.-Oct. 1957
	10	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley— Roddie Rose Correspondence	1954
	11	Office of the President, Walter O'Malley—Correspondence re Stadium Site Advocacy	1955, 1957
	12	Office of the Asst. Gen. Manager and Vice President—Correspondence	1956-57
	13	Site drawings; proposed stadium drawings and maps	1955
	14	Newspaper Clippings	1947-1957
	15	Newspaper Clippings – Brooklyn Sports Center Authority	
	16	Newspaper Clippings – Robert Moses	
	17	Newspaper Clippings - Early possible moves	
	18	Newspaper Clippings - “Stadium” file	
	19	www.walteromalley.com (documents scanned to website)	
	20	Collier's Magazine (article)	1952
	21	Publications	
2		1955 Dodger banner – stored separately following conservation in 2005	

Noteworthy correspondents:

Correspondence to and from John Cashmore (President of the Borough of Brooklyn)	Folders 4, 5, 6, 9
Correspondence to and from Buckminster Fuller (architect/engineer)	Folder 4
Correspondence to and from Averill Harriman (Governor of the State of New York)	Folder 5
Correspondence to and from Robert Moses (Chairman of the City of New York Office of Committee on Slum Clearance, City Construction Co-Ordinator)	Folders 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
Correspondence to and from Robert F. Wagner (Mayor of the City of New York)	Folders 4, 5, 6, 7