

# A Guide to the Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Letters, 1940, 1956 SC 0061

Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Letters

1940



## Title Statement

A Guide to the Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Letters, 1940, 1956 SC 0061

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

**Unit ID**

SC 0061

**Unit ID**

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**Unit Date**

1940

**Unit Date**

1956

**Language**

English

## Abstract

The Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Letters, 1940, 1956, is a collection of approximately 60 congratulatory letters presented to Shaeffer upon her retirement as director of the Glee Club from Madison College. Correspondents are former students who sang under direction and tutelage.

## Extent

0.06 cubic feet 1 letter folder

## Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

# Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

Collection open to research. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

## Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collections Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk (library-special@jmu.edu).

## Acquisition Information

This collection was found in Special Collections storage in 1982 when the department was created. It was housed in one storage box along with miscellaneous minutes and scrapbooks of student activities.

## Processing Information

Based on an earlier iteration of the collection title (Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Album), this collection of letters was likely bound in an album or scrapbook at some point. The current state of the letters is that they are all loose. It is unclear when they were removed from their original housing or what became of the album. In order to streamline the process of applying collection numbers, Special Collections staff completed a large-scale renumbering campaign in the spring of 2017. **This collection was previously cataloged as SU 93-0331.**

## Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], [box #, folder #], Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Letters, 1940, 1956, SC 0061 Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

# Bio/Historical Note

Edna Trout Shaeffer was born near Harrisonburg on January 11, 1886 to Edmund Shaeffer and Dora M. Shaeffer. She studied music in Boston and New York and became Glee Club Director at the State Normal School for Women at Harrisonburg in 1916, a position she held until her retirement in 1956. Shaeffer was also a member of the music faculty and, in addition to the Glee Club, she worked with the Madison College Chorus. Perhaps the most significant highlight from her tenure at Madison occurred in March 1956 when Shaeffer, along with 29 Glee Club members, performed for service members in Keflavik, Iceland; Lajes Field, Azores; and Kindley Air Force Base, Bermuda. The performances were part of an Easter Concert Tour with the Military Air Transport Service Division of the United States Air Force. Other highlights include performances in Winchester's Apple Blossom Festival, singing partnerships with other colleges, performances with the National Symphony Orchestra, and a 1955 trip to Florida to sing with the Federation of Music Clubs.

Outside of the college, Shaeffer served as Director of Music and organist at Harrisonburg's First Presbyterian Church for 52 years. She was a former president of the Virginia Federation of Music Clubs and was a member of the American Guild of Organists.

Shaeffer died September 12, 1959 and is buried at Woodbine Cemetery in Harrisonburg. Shaeffer's impact on the JMU community reached well beyond her time at the university and beyond her lifetime. The Latimer-Shaeffer Theatre opened in Duke Hall in 1967 and was named after Shaeffer and Mary Latimer, former head of the drama department at Madison College. The theatre closed in 2010 with a final production of "bobrauschenbergamerica." Additionally, the Edna T. Shaeffer Humanist Award is awarded to faculty members in the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Visual and Performing Arts for scholarly research projects on topics in the humanities.

# Scope and Content

The Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Letters, 1940, 1956, is a collection of approximately 60 congratulatory letters presented to Shaeffer upon her retirement as director of the Glee Club from Madison College. Correspondents are former students who sang under direction and tutelage. The correspondents share fond memories and funny anecdotes of time spent in the Glee Club and express their appreciation of Shaeffer's leadership, knowledge, and expertise. Of particular interest is a letter from a former student, Helen, who wrote to Shaeffer just 24 hours after giving birth to congratulate her on her retirement. A May 1, 1956 letter from Mrs. Walter E. Hoffman includes two black-and-white photographs of Hoffman. Other correspondents include Delphine Hurst Parsons, Mary Spitzer Etter, Inez Graybeal Roop, and Julia Smith Martin.

Two letters not directly related to Shaeffer's retirement include a letter from Albert H. Franz of the United States Air Force expressing his appreciation of the Glee Club's outstanding entertainment provided to service personnel in Iceland, the Azores, and Bermuda. The second is a thank-you letter dated January 14, 1940 from Gray Pifer, music instructor at the Pythian Home in New Market.

## Related Material

JMU Special Collections houses numerous collections of Glee Club alumni.

## Keywords

Music in universities and colleges -- Virginia -- History

Music -- Instruction and study -- Virginia -- History

Education, Higher -- Virginia -- Harrisonburg

Universities and colleges -- Virginia -- Harrisonburg -- History

Harrisonburg (Va.) -- History

Letters (correspondence)

Black-and-white photographs

Shaeffer, Edna Trout, 1886-1959

State Normal School for Women at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Faculty -- Correspondence

State Normal School for Women at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Students -- Correspondence

State Normal School for Women at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- History

State Normal School for Women at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Music -- Instruction and study -- History

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Faculty -- Correspondence

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Students -- Correspondence

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- History

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Music -- Instruction and study -- History

Madison College -- Faculty -- Correspondence

Madison College -- Students -- Correspondence

Madison College -- History

Madison College -- Music -- Instruction and study -- History

James Madison University -- Faculty -- Correspondence

James Madison University -- Students -- Correspondence

James Madison University -- History

James Madison University -- Music -- Instruction and study -- History

## Bibliography

*The Breeze*, March 23, 1956. Harrisonburg (Va.): Madison College. *The Breeze*, May 4, 1956. Harrisonburg (Va.): Madison College. *The Breeze*, October 7, 1967. Harrisonburg (Va.): Madison College. *The Breeze*, March 25, 1968. Harrisonburg (Va.): Madison College. "New Market Budget of News," *Daily News-Record*, February 12, 1938. Obituary for Edna T. Shaeffer, *Daily News-Record*, September 14, 1959.

## Arrangement

The collection is housed in one letter folder.

## Description of Subordinate Components

**Edna T. Shaeffer Retirement Letters**

**Unit ID** /repositories/4/archival\_objects/2340

**Unit Date** 1940

**Unit Date** 1956

**Mixed Materials [1000886509]** 1 (box)

**Container** 1 (folder)