

A Guide to the Alpha Spitzer Travel Diary, 1939 SC 0069

Alpha Spitzer Travel Diary
1939



Title Statement

A Guide to the Alpha Spitzer Travel Diary, 1939 SC 0069

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 0069

Unit Date

1939

Language

English .

Abstract

The Alpha Spitzer Travel Diary, 1939, is comprised of one 3 ³/₄ x 5 ³/₄ inch spiral notebook chronicling Spitzer's trip with her sister Margaret from Broadway, Virginia to Pueblo, Colorado and back during the summer of 1939. Both Spitzer sisters were alumni of Broadway High School and the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg.

Creator

Spitzer, Alpha Marie, 1917-2013

Extent

0.06 cubic feet 1 letter folder

Repository

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

Administrative Information

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Acquisition Information

Acquired from Ebay in March 2017 from a seller in Nellysford, Virginia.

Preferred Citation

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Alpha Spitzer Travel Diary, 1939, SC 0069, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Bio/Historical Note

Alpha Marie Spitzer was born May 2, 1917 in Broadway, Virginia to Grover Spitzer and Ethel Holsinger Spitzer. She graduated from Broadway High School in 1933 and from the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg in 1937 with a Bachelor of Science degree in High School Teaching and Administration. While at the State Teachers College, Spitzer was an active member of the Curie Science Club, Sesame Club, Alpha Literary Society, Hiking Club, Varsity Hockey, Varsity Basketball, numerous other class sports, and the Y. W. C. A. Her sister Margaret Lucile Spitzer (1915-2008) also graduated in 1937 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics.

Spitzer began teaching math and French at Linville-Edom High School. She moved to Fairfax, Virginia in 1943 to teach business education and direct vocational office training. In 1955, Spitzer received her master's degree from Virginia Tech. Spitzer also served as the first treasurer of what is now the Apple Federal Credit Union. She returned to the Shenandoah Valley in 1995 and was active in the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren and also volunteered at the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society. In 2001, Spitzer endowed what is today known as the Spitzer (Alpha) Family Scholarship for Mathematics & Science Education. Formerly known as the Spitzer Family Scholarship Fund for Business and Marketing Education, the scholarship is intended to benefit a JMU student who hails from Rockingham or Fairfax County, Virginia and Mathematics or Science major in the secondary education program. She is often quoted as saying the following about her alma mater: "JMU is not just an institution of higher learning, it is a spirit, it is an atmosphere, it is a way of life I am glad to say that I have lived." Spitzer died July 13, 2013.

Scope and Content

The Alpha Spitzer Travel Diary, 1939, is comprised of one 3 ¾ x 5 ¾ inch spiral notebook chronicling Spitzer's trip with her sister Margaret from Broadway, Virginia to Pueblo, Colorado and back during the summer of 1939. Both Spitzer sisters were alumni of Broadway High School and the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg.

The Spitzer sisters traveled by car, a 1935 Ford, from their hometown of Broadway, Virginia to Pueblo, Colorado where they visited friends and family. They left Broadway on the morning of July 23, 1939, arrived in Pueblo, Colorado on July 27, and returned home to Broadway the evening of August 10. They visited many sites along the way and Alpha chronicled their jaunts and funny findings in brief diary entries. Pit stops and corresponding diary entries of note include the Greenbrier resort at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia ("Very well kept"); Hawk's Nest State Park, Ansted, West Virginia ("Took 3 pictures of New River Gorge"); Mt. Sterling, Kentucky ("Stopped for radiator repair on car"); Lexington, Kentucky ("Stopped for gas at Gulf. Worked penny slot machine...Took pictures of tobacco"); Shoals, Indiana ("Stopped to see Jug Rock and Pinnacle (adm 10¢). Took pictures"); Hutchinson, Kansas ("Scene of many large grain elevators. A city very

nice. We went to hamburger stand & got ice coffee. Crossed the Arkansas River"); and Dodge City, Kansas ("In dust storm this eve. Saw tumbleweed blowing across road. Saw jack rabbit a while back"). The sisters visited other cities of interest including Dodge City, Kansas; Denver, Colorado; Pikes Peak, Colorado; Lincoln, Nebraska; Moline, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Niagara Falls, New York; and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Included in the travel diary is a preliminary itinerary titled "Tripping thru the States." It is dated July 1, 1939, three weeks prior to the start of the trip. It is largely representative of the sisters' actual trip with the exception of a visit to the New York World's Fair which did not occur. Additionally, the trip was planned to begin July 27, four days later than the actual start date, and end August 20, when the sisters would return home. They arrived in Broadway on August 10. Lists of the sisters' respective expenditures – gas, food, lodging, Kodak film, etc. – are interspersed in the diary entries. A list of "motoring maps" used by the sisters to inform their travel routes is also included.

The pages immediately following the conclusion of the travel entries are blank. Several pages at the very end of the notebook include calculations, lists of names and addresses, and a list of pictures taken on the trip equaling six rolls of film.

Alpha Spitzer's address label, that post-dates the diary, is affixed to the front cover of the notebook.

Keywords

Automobile travel -- United States -- History -- 20th century

Travel -- History -- 20th century

Travelers -- United States -- 20th century

Travelers' writings -- History -- 20th century

Voyages and travels -- History -- 20th century

Women travelers -- United States -- History -- 20th century

United States -- Description and travel

Diaries

State Teachers College at Harrisonburg (Harrisonburg, Va.) -- Alumni and alumnae

Bibliography

Obituary for Alpha M. Spitzer, *Daily News-Record*, July 17, 2013. Program for the Twenty-Eighth Annual Commencement Exercises, State Teachers College, June 7, 1937. "Spitzer (Alpha) Family Scholarship for Mathematics & Science Education." James Madison University Scholarships & Financial Aid.

<https://www.jmu.edu/scholarships/coe/spitzer-alpha-family-scholarship.shtml> (accessed October 30, 2017). *The Schoolma'am*, 1937. Harrisonburg (Va.): State Teachers College. "Who Gives? The Spitzer Sisters," *Montpelier* (Winter 2002): back cover.

Arrangement

The diary remains bound and is housed in one letter folder.

Description of Subordinate Components

Alpha Spitzer Travel Diary

Unit Date 1939

Mixed Materials [1000886510] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)