



Mary Jane Barnett Papers (CG0004)

Collection Number: CG0004

Collection Title: Mary Jane Barnett Papers

Dates: 1913-1997

Creator: Barnett, Mary Jane, 1908-1997

Abstract: The Mary Jane Barnett Papers contains correspondence, photographs, diaries, scrapbooks, business-related trade journals, a Narcotic Register, and other papers for Mary Jane Barnett and her life and business partner, Elaine (Tommie) Davis.

Collection Size: 1.6 cubic feet
(26 folders, 1 videocassette, 1 film reel, 722 photographs)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Cape Girardeau](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at capegirardeau@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the University all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Mary Jane Barnett Papers* (CG0004); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Cape Girardeau [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Cape Girardeau].

Donor Information: The scrapbooks were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Evelyn Boardman on April 7, 2015 (Accession No. CGA0006). An addition was made by Cathy Crites on May 23, 2016 (Accession No. CGA0006.1)

Alternative Forms Available: Photographs are digitized and available on our website [here](#). Audio visual material have been digitized and is available on request.

Processed by: Processed by Garret B. Kremer-Wright, July 2019

Historical Note:

Mary Jane Barnett was born in Litchfield, Illinois, on July 19, 1908, the oldest daughter of William C. "Claud" Barnett and Bertha C. Waggoner. She had a younger sister, Elizabeth L. Barnett Doyle. She attended schools Illinois Woman's College (now MacMurray College) in 1930, Normal School in Bloomington, and Bradley University in Peoria. After graduating from college, she spent six months traveling with the United Producing Company of Fairfield, Iowa. She moved to Southeast Missouri to teach music in 1933, where she taught in high schools for seven years in Hornersville, Diehlstadt, and Sikeston in 1937. It was around this time that she met fellow teacher Elaine "Tommie" Davis. Prior to meeting each other, Davis opened the Co-op Cut Rate Drug Store, 40 North Main Street in downtown Cape Girardeau, in 1933. In 1938, Barnett became her business partner. This partnership lasted until Davis's death in 1981.

Elaine "Tommie" Davis was born in East Prairie, Missouri, on October 18, 1911, a daughter of Elgin C. Davis and Henrietta E. Grissom. She had two younger sisters, Annie and Maxine. She graduated from Southeast Missouri State University and, following graduation, she was a teacher and basketball coach, briefly, in East Prairie.

Barnett and Davis co-sponsored the Davis-Barnett Awards. These scholarships began in 1956, in seven categories, and were given to students in the Southeast Missouri State University theater department. Barnett herself played the violin in the Cape Girardeau Symphony for several years in the 1950s. She was also known to play several other instruments including the balalaika, autoharp, and concertina. Davis died on January 4, 1981, and was buried at Memorial Park Cemetery in Sikeston, Missouri.

Barnett continued to operate the business, under the name Co-op Boutique, for ten years, retiring in 1991. She passed away on April 15, 1997, and her cremated remains were buried in Carrollton City Cemetery in Carrollton, Illinois.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into five series.

Correspondence
Personal
Business
Photographs
Audiovisual

Scope and Content Note:**Correspondence**

This series includes correspondence to Mary Jane Barnett from her partner Elaine "Tommie" Davis, William C. and Bertha Barnett (her parents), Raymond C. Carselowey, and other correspondents. Of interest is a letter from Barnett discussing the hanging of Fred Adams, who was the last person executed by public hanging in Dunklin County in April 1937.

Personal

This series contains Elaine “Tommie” Davis’s East Prairie High School scrapbook from 1925 to 1929. She graduated from that high school in 1929. Also include in the series is Barnett’s contract with Universal Producing Company, State of Missouri teaching certificates, and MacMurray College transcript from 1931-1937. The series also includes a guest book from Davis and Barnett’s residence at 617 Sunset Boulevard in Cape Girardeau. Additional Barnett documents include two diaries written in 1947 and 1956.

Business

This series contains documents related to the Co-op Cut Rate Drug store, including a register of customers who were prescribed narcotics (over-the counter drugs), a photocopied scrapbook containing images of the store and similar drug stores across the nation, and newspaper clippings related to the business and Mary Jane Barnett’s death in 1997.

Photographs

This series includes 722 photographs (226 have been digitized), of the interior of Co-op Cut Rate Drug Store, Mary Jane Barnett, Elaine “Tommie” Davis, Terry Doyle, Elizabeth Barnett Doyle, exterior and interior views of Barnett and Davis’s residence at 617 Sunset Boulevard (they were a lesbian couple), and flooding of downtown Cape Girardeau at an unknown time. The photographs are arranged by decade.

Audiovisual

This series includes a reel to reel and videocassette (which has been digitized) of home movies of Mary Jane Barnett and Elaine “Tommie” Davis. Captured on video are various parades, including the Sesquicentennial, weddings, vacations, flooding, and holiday parties.

Container List:

f. 1-5		Correspondence
Box 001	f. 1	From: Elaine “Tommie” Davis To: Mary Jane Barnett, 1946, 1955, 1981
	f. 2	William and Bertha C. Barnett, 1929, 1937, 1955-1956
	f. 3	Assorted correspondents, 1937, 1964
	f. 4	From: Raymond C. Carselowey To: Mary Jane Barnett, 1929-1930
	f. 5	From: Raymond C. Carselowey To: Mary Jane Barnett, undated
f. 6-12		Personal
	f. 6	Universal Producing Company, 1924, 1930, 1962
	f. 7	Mary Jane Barnett State of Missouri teaching certificates and MacMurray College transcripts, 1931-1937
	f. 8	Elaine “Tommie” Davis East Prairie High School scrapbook, 1925-1929
	f. 9	Barnett and Davis residence (617 Sunset Blvd.) guest book, 1934-1943
	f. 10	Mary Jane Barnett diary, 1947
	f. 11	Mary Jane Barnett diary, 1956
Box 002	f. 12	Mary Jane Barnett address book with notes, 1987
f. 13-15		Business
	f. 13	Narcotics register, 1941-1954
	f. 14	Co-op Cut Rate Drug photocopied scrapbook, 1935-1950

	f. 15	Business and Mary Jane Barnett obituary newspaper clippings, 1941, 1988, 1991, 1997
f. 16-23		Photographs
Box 003	f. 16	Family and Cape Girardeau flooding photographs, 1919-1940
	f. 17	1913-1919
	f. 18	Mary Jane Barnett, 1920-1929
	f. 19-22	Family and Co-op Cut Rate Drug, 1930-1969
	f. 23	Photographs and slides, 1970-1979
	f. 24	Mary Jane Barnett, 1980-1997
		Audiovisual
Box 004	f. 25	8mm film, November 1952
	f. 26	VHS, circa 1958

Index:

Index term	Folder	Image
Adams, Fred, 1915-1937	3	
Barnett, Bertha, 1880-1956	2, 10, 16, 19, 20	Yes
Barnett, Mary Jane, 1908-1997	1-7, 9-13, 16-26	Yes
Barnett, William C., 1875-1937	2, 16, 20	Yes
Boardman, John L. E., 1926-1999	24	Yes
Cape Girardeau (Mo.)	9-16, 19-24, 26	Yes
Capital punishment	3	
Carselowey, Raymond C., 1908-1960	4, 5	Yes
Co-op Cut Rate Drug Store (Cape Girardeau, Mo.)	1, 13-16, 19-21, 26	Yes
Davis, Elaine, 1911-1981	1, 8-11, 13, 16, 19-23, 26	Yes
Doyle, Elizabeth, 1912-1999	2, 10, 11, 16, 17, 19-23, 26	Yes
Doyle, Terry	11, 20, 21, 25-26	Yes
East Prairie (Mo.)	6, 8	Yes
Fashion	18-24	Yes
Hornersville (Mo.)	19	Yes
Illinois Woman's College	3, 7	
King, Lloyd W., 1892-1970	7	
Lesbian businesswomen	1, 10-11, 18, 23-24, 25-26	Yes
MacMurray College	3, 7	
Men's clothing	19-23	Yes
Parades	21, 26	Yes
Sikeston (Mo.)	6, 7	
Southeast Missouri State University	16	Yes
Universal Producing Company	6	
Women's clothing	18-24	Yes