



Alma Sioux Scarberry Papers (C3913)

Collection Number: C3913

Collection Title: Alma Sioux Scarberry Papers

Dates: 1899-1990

Creator: Scarberry, Alma Sioux, 1899-1990

Abstract: The papers of Alma Sioux Scarberry, a reporter, novelist, script writer, publicist, and entertainer, include correspondence, clippings, photographs, newspaper serials, books, manuscripts, sheet music, audio tapes, and materials documenting her career and personal life.

Collection Size: 3.0 cubic feet, 41 audio cassettes, 14 audio discs
(107 folders)

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-Columbia](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The donor retains copyrights he holds in the papers, with the understanding researchers are free to use and quote from any of the materials consistent with the Fair Use Doctrine of the Copyright Law.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Alma Sioux Scarberry Papers* (C3913); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by her son Theodore Klein, Jr. on March 13, 1991 (Accession No. CA5011). An addition to the papers was made by Klein on January 6, 1992 (Accession No. CA5131).

Processed by: Processed by David Moore on August 24, 1995. Finding aid revised by Elizabeth Engel on December 20, 2021.

Biographical Note:

Alma Sioux Scarberry was born in Kentucky in 1899, the daughter of a strict, fundamentalist minister. Early in life Scarberry supported herself with odd jobs. She worked her way to New York City at the young age of seventeen by selling varnish. Scarberry became one of the first Yeomanettes when she enlisted in the Navy for one year.

In 1918 Scarberry began her career by writing free-lance, but was soon displaying her acting talents as well. Two years later King Features hired her to write daily columns. During the next six years she became well known for her reporting stunts and daring articles. She once dressed as a homeless person and begged for money to expose fraudulent beggars in Philadelphia. During 1922 to 1924 she also appeared on Broadway in Irving Berlin's Music Box Revue and in the Schubert Theater's *The Mikado*.

Scarberry moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1926 to take a position as a daily columnist for the Pittsburgh *Sun Telegraph*. Scarberry wrote her first romance novel, *Make Up*, in 1927 and it appeared in newspapers as a serial. The popularity of this work prompted more offers and, over the next two decades, Scarberry wrote for Central Press, Bell Syndicate, and the North American Newspaper Alliances. The National Broadcasting Company bought one of her radio dramas.

In 1930 she married Theodore A. Klein, Sr. and moved to Chicago. A son, Theodore A. Klein, Jr., was born in 1932. The marriage ended after approximately ten years.

The 1940s and 1950s were productive years for Scarberry. The Columbia Broadcasting System in Hollywood, California, hired Scarberry as a publicity specialist in 1940. She soon became head of the writing department at the Mutual Don Lee Network. She also began to write songs during this time. "Love You Big as Texas" and "Gonna Lasso You a Rainbow," were some of her more popular tunes. In 1944 Scarberry returned to New York City where she directed the Radio Bureau of the New York National War Fund. Between 1949 and 1951 Scarberry opened her own creative writing schools in San Antonio, Texas; Fort Smith, Arkansas; and Dallas, Texas. She continued to write features, columns, songs, and radio scripts. In 1955 Scarberry returned to serial publication through General Features with "The Doofer Family," a children's fantasy story.

Scarberry took a public relations position in 1959 with the Columbus Plastic Products, Inc., in Ohio. She solicited her contacts in Hollywood to market the company's Lustro Ware merchandise, and upon her request, several television variety shows and commercials used Lustro Ware products as props. For the next six years, Scarberry provided her publicity services to a variety of good causes such as the Council for Retarded Children and Cerebral Palsy of Central Ohio.

In 1965 Scarberry moved to Austin, Texas, to be closer to her son and grandchildren. She continued to handle publicity for organizations. Her work with Goodwill Industries, the Old Bakery and Emporium, and Austin Parks and Recreation allowed her to work with disadvantaged and elderly people. She also became a regular feature on a local radio talk show hosted by Cactus Pryor, and she wrote articles for local publications and starred in television commercials. Scarberry died in 1990, after achieving celebrity status in Austin for her publicity efforts.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following two series and four subseries:

Personal

Professional

Correspondence

Public Relations

Writings

Miscellaneous

Scope and Content Note:

The **Personal** series primarily contains correspondence (1924-1990), clippings (1925-1989), and photographs (1899-1988) that are not directly associated with Scarberry's career. This series also contains biographical material, including an interview with Scarberry conducted circa 1981, address and guest books, scrapbooks, and material about her son and grandson, Ted A. Klein, Jr. and Travis Klein, respectively. This series is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

There are four subseries in the **Professional** series: Correspondence, Public Relations, Writings, and Miscellaneous. All four subseries are arranged chronologically. The series contains material about Scarberry's career as a writer and publicist.

The Correspondence subseries (1940-1985) contains general information about Scarberry's various positions and writings.

The Public Relations subseries (1940s-1984) is comprised of material about her advertising career, beginning with the Columbia Broadcasting System in the early 1940s and ending with the numerous organizations she promoted in Austin during the 1970s and 1980s. Notes and reports about her activities in the Austin area make up the majority of the material in this section.

The Writings subseries (1930-1985) consists of Scarberry's romance novels and serials, radio scripts, manuscripts, and musical writings that are comprised of sheet music and audio recordings. An alphabetical index to the four folders that contain sheet music, lyrics, and audio recordings is at the end of this inventory. In addition, there is material about "The Doofer Family" that includes manuscripts, illustrations, radio scripts, and clippings.

The Miscellaneous subseries (1941-1980s) contains three folders pertaining to Scarberry's creative writing workshops, material related to her military service, and notes and audio cassettes from the Cactus Pryor Show. The audio cassettes are recorded conversations with Scarberry from Pryor's radio talk show during the 1970s and 1980s.

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- f. 3 Biographical material, 1939-1990
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 - f. 47 Austin [Texas] Parks and Recreation, senior programs, notes, c. 1980
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- f. 56 Penthouse Love, novel, 1934
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- f. 63 "Love Will Come Again," serial, 1941
- f. 64 "Stars Over Hollywood," script, 1943
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- f. 68-69 "The Baby Racket Murders," manuscript, c. 1950
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