



## **Bessie Mae Spurling Megee Papers (C4433)**

**Collection Number:** C4433

**Collection Title:** Bessie Mae Spurling Megee Papers

**Dates:** 1935-1991

**Creator:** Megee, Bessie Mae Spurling, 1904-1995

**Abstract:** This collection consists of material regarding a prolific promotional contest winner from Moberly, Missouri.

**Collection Size:** 0.7 cubic feet  
(15 folders, 5 CDs)

**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](mailto:columbia@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Bessie Mae Spurling Megee Papers* (C4433); 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 Susan Jackson on August 26, 2005 (Accession No. CA6081).

**Processed by:** Processed by Trevor Stratton on July 13, 2021

**Historical Note:**

Bessie M. Megee (1904-1995) was a resident of Stoutsville and Moberly, Missouri, at different times throughout her life before moving to St. Louis in 1957. She made a hobby out of entering contests that were hosted by companies that featured grand prizes such as a \$10 gift card or a trip to Mexico. Bessie was known as a serial winner of these competitions after she began competing in the 1930s. Bessie has reportedly won several hundred contests and has worked her way up to establishing herself "among the top 10 contesters in the U.S."

**Arrangement:**

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

**Papers**

- Personal
- Competition
- Magazines
- Correspondence

**CDs**

**Scope and Content Note:**

**Papers**

This series contains both written and printed material related to Bessie Mae Spurling Megee's experiences as a contester.

**Personal**

Consists of newspaper clippings that feature Bessie Megee and highlight her achievements as a contester. Additionally, there is a handwritten journal that contains jingles and slogans that were written by Bessie. There is often a short description of the respective jingle or slogan and a note of what prizes she may have won with it. Additionally, there is a handwritten set of cards containing an autobiographical narrative of Bessie and her experiences as a contester. Finally, there is a printed copy of a speech that Bessie delivered at a national contester's convention in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1961.

**Competition Flyers/Results**

Contains flyers that companies used to describe and advertise their competitions. There are also lists of recent winners of many different competitions across the country, usually featuring Bessie's name among the winners.

**Magazines**

Twenty-two issues of *Contest Magazine* ranging from the year 1938 to 1944. This magazine contains articles written by contesters that describe their experiences and offers tips on how to be successful in the hobby. Additionally, each issue contains lists of active contests that the readers could have entered.

## Correspondence

Contains congratulatory mail from companies informing Bessie Megee that she was chosen as a winner of their contest. These letters often describe the contest as well as a description of the award itself. Occasionally a check or gift certificate will accompany the letter from the company. Arranged chronologically with undated material at the end.

## CDs

This series consists of a set of five CDs that contain an autobiographical interview of Bessie done by KMOX radio station in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1983. Bessie speaks on her experience as a contestee and her personal life and memories as she reflects on her past.

## Container List:

Papers	f. 1-15
f.1	Personal, 1937-1986
f. 2-3	Competitions, 1930s-1940s
f. 4-8	Magazines, 1938-1944
f. 9-15	Correspondence, 1935-1991
CDs 1-5	Autobiographical interview

## Index:

Index Terms	Folder	Mediums
<i>Contest Magazine</i>	4-8	
Contests	1-15	
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Moberly (Mo.)	1	
National Contesters Association	1, 4-8	
National Contesters Association Convention (1961)	1	