Introduction

This collection contains the personal papers of Marjorie Phyllis Smith Conzelman Davis (1904-2003) of Barre and Montpelier, Vermont. The collection also includes account books and diaries of Mrs. Davis’s mother, Lena Merrill Smith (1879-1955), and Merrill family information. The collection contains material from the period 1892-1991. The collection was donated by Mrs. Davis’s stepson, Thomas C. Davis, in two parts in 1997 and 2012. The collection is stored in three document center boxes, two flip-top archival box, and related cassette tapes; it consumes 3.75 linear feet of shelf space.

Biographical Note


Arthur (Budge) Smith served in World War II as a B-17 pilot and died when his plane was shot down over Germany in 1944. Before his death, he married Barbara White (daughter of Ezra L. White) of Barre, Vermont; their children were Michael Richard Smith and Arthur M. O. Smith Jr.

Marjorie Phyllis Smith graduated from Spaulding High School in Barre, Vermont, in 1922 and from Skidmore College in 1926. She married West Point graduate Clair McKinley Conzelman in 1926. Their children included Patricia Jane (Patsy) Conzelman (b. 31 July 1930) and Peter Smith Conzelman (b. 25 July 1928). During World War II, the Conzelman family lived for a time on Corregidor Island in the Philippines before Marjorie and the children were evacuated in 1941. Lieutenant Colonel Clair Conzelman became a prisoner of war following the surrender of Corregidor. He died when the Japanese prison ship Enoura Maru was bombed by Allied fighter planes in Taiwan Harbor in 1945.

Following her first husband’s death, Marjorie Conzelman worked for the Vermont Council of Safety while raising her two children. She eventually became interested in oil painting and entered her work in various art shows. In 1952, she remarried to Deane Chandler Davis (1900-1990), president of National Life Insurance Company of Vermont and later Governor of Vermont, 1969-1973.

Marjorie Phyllis Smith Conzelman Davis died at the home of her son, Peter Conzelman, in New Bern, North Carolina, on 17 January 2003, at the age of 98. During her life, she was active in social and state activities as hostess “par excellence” for her second husband, in alumni activities of Skidmore College and West Point (husband and son were alumni), as well as...

**Scope and Content**

This collection consists of the personal papers of both Marjorie Phyllis Smith Conzelman Davis of Barre and Montpelier, Vermont, and her mother, Lena Merrill Smith, 1892-1991. Records related to Lena Merrill Smith include diaries, 1892-1955, and daily planners, 1922-1950. In her diaries, Lena Smith wrote about every-day life on the farm, the weather, her husband Roy and the children. Other materials document genealogy and history of the Merrill-Smith family and include photographs and registers from Merrill’s Mountain Home in East Warren, N.H.

Personal papers of Marjorie Phyllis Smith Conzelman Davis include correspondence, 1916-1991, with a sizable portion of letters written during World War II. These letters document the experiences of the Conzelman family living on Corregidor Island in the Philippines before being evacuated in 1941 as well as the years before Clair Conzelman’s death when he was a prisoner of war in Japan. Also, in a later letter written to her children in 1984, Marjorie Davis recounts the experience of leaving her husband behind in the Philippines in 1941.

Marjorie Conzelman Davis’s diaries, primarily 1952-1983, are also included; the 1952 diary coincides with her second marriage to Deane C. Davis, president of National Life Insurance Company of Vermont and later Governor of Vermont, 1969-1973. A note in the collection stating that some of missing diaries (written prior to 1952) were “lost in our flood at Five Dyer Avenue, Montpelier, Vt.,” probably indicates she had developed the habit of keeping a diary earlier in life.

Other materials in the collection reflect Marjorie Conzelman Davis’s interest in oil painting and include programs for various art shows where she entered her work. The collection also includes a small amount of material from Governor Davis’s campaigns and life, including his daily planner for 1990 (the last year of his life). A film with advertisements created during Deane Davis’s 1970 campaign for second term as governor is stored as Film B-58. Famously, this ad campaign included footage of Davis bailing out a row boat named “Vermont,” a reference to Davis’s support for a sales tax to stabilize the state budget.

Marjorie Conzelman Davis wrote “The Merrill Mountain Home” (perhaps unpublished) as well as a privately published memoir for her family recounting their life in the Philippines during World War II. Also represented in the collection are materials documenting her affiliations with Skidmore College, West Point (her first husband and son were alumni), the Indianapolis Anti-Crime Crusade in Vermont during the period 1969-1971, and prisoner of war and widow activities.

**Related Collections**

• Video C-371, Merrill’s Mountain Home Folk, 1993. New Hampshire Public Television includes footage of Marjorie Davis.
• Video C-372, Merrill’s Mountain Home, 1993.
• Film B-58, “Sam Miller’s Film,” political advertisements from Deane Davis’s 1970 campaign for governor
  o Bailing out a rowboat named “Vermont”
  o Green-Up Day
  o Walking with a blind woman
  o Feeding horses, likely in his backyard
• Audio Tape R-41, Bennington Battle Day, Deane C. Davis, Governor of Vermont, no date.
• FB-124, Marjorie S. Davis photographs (2 boxes)
• Unprocessed collection of negatives taken by Marjorie Davis
• *Deane C. Davis: An Autobiography* by Deane C. Davis with Nancy Price Graff, 1991 (call no. 920 D291g)

**Inventory**

1. Lena Merrill Smith
   
   Doc 737:01  Smith account book, miscellaneous early 1900s
   02 _____, 1933-1947
   03 _____, Record book of stock and miscellaneous, 1929-1950
   04 Diary, 1892
   05 _____, 1900
   06 _____, 1901
   07 _____, 1902, January-April
   08 _____, 1901, divided for Lena Apr-Dec 1902 and for Roy Jan-Mar 1901
   09 _____, 1902, for Roy
   10 _____, 1903
   11 _____, 1904
   12 _____, 1905
   13 _____, 1906
   14 _____, 1907
   15 _____, 1908
   16 _____, 1909
   17 _____, 1910
   18 _____, 1911
   19 _____, 1912-1916
   20 _____, 1917-1921
   21 _____, 1922
   22 _____, 1932
   23 _____, 1933
   24 _____, 1934
   25 _____, 1935
   26 _____, 1936
   27 _____, 1937

*Vermont Historical Society • Barre, VT 05641-4209*
28 _____, 1938
29 _____, 1939
30 _____, 1946
31 _____, 1947
32 _____, 1948
33 _____, 1949
34 _____, 1950
35 _____, 1951
36 _____, 1952
37 _____, 1953
38 _____, 1954
39 _____, 1955
40 Travel Diary, Western trip, 1949
41 _____, Florida trip, 1953
42 Daily Planner, 1922
43 _____, 1923
44 _____, 1924
45 _____, 1925
46 _____, 1926
47 _____, 1927
48 _____, 1929
49 _____, 1930
50 _____, 1931
51 _____, 1937
52 _____, 1939
53 _____, 1940
54 _____, 1941?
55 _____, 1950
56 Arthur LeRoy (Roy) Smith, letter from Uncle Pete, 1927 farm lease, memorial resolution
57 Arthur Merrill Olin Smith, letters, US Treasury Dept. certificate, obituaries, memorials
58 Lena Dorothy Smith, poem, 1913
59 _____, letters from family, 1928-1944, postcards
60 Lena Merrill Smith, Memorial Record, 29 November 1955

II. Merrill-Smith Family
Doc 738:01 Merrill-Smith family genealogy and reunion, 1984
02 Merrill’s Mountain Home, Register July 4, 1870-July 14, 1883
03 _____, Photo book, 1898
04 _____, John Merrill Olin, 1892-1982, interviews and biography
05 _____, Photographs, building
06 _____, people
07 _____, miscellaneous
08 _____, “Tip Top Years”, story 1915-1917 by William Morse
09 _____, scrapbook by Lena M. Smith, photocopy 1879-1955
10 _____, Excerpts from scrapbook and miscellaneous
11 _____, information & book draft by Marjorie S. Davis

III. Marjorie Smith Conzelman Davis
12 Marjorie Phyllis Smith, letters to parents, 1928
13 _____, _____, and others, 1928-1930
14 Letters to Marjorie, 1916, 1921, 1927, 1940-1941
15 _____, January-June 1942
16 _____, July-December 1942
17 _____, 1943
18 _____, January-June, 1944
19 _____, July-December, 1944
20 _____, January-June, 1945
21 _____, July-December, 1945
22 _____, 1946
23 _____, 1947-1952
24 _____, Sympathy, 1991
25 _____, from Greeley family
26 Miscellaneous letters
27 Patricia Conzelman Greeley, letters to family and miscellaneous
28 Peter Smith Conzelman, letters and schooling
29 Susan Mary Conzelman, letters and photo
30 Postcards to Barbara Smith
30.1 Diary, 1920
31 _____, 1952
32 _____, 1953
33 _____, 1954
34 _____, 1955
35 _____, 1956
36 _____, 1957

Doc 739:01 Diary, 1958
02 _____, 1959
03 _____, 1960
04 _____, 1961
05 _____, 1962
06 _____, 1963
07 _____, 1964
08 _____, 1966, January-March, used by Susan M. Conzelman as 1974
09 _____, 1972
10 _____, 1973
11 _____, 1974
12 _____, 1975
13 _____, 1976
14 _____, 1977
15 _____, 1978
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<td>18</td>
<td>_____, 1983</td>
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<td>18.1</td>
<td>_____, circa 1984 letter to children recounting leaving her husband behind in the Philippines, 1941</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Engagement book, undated</td>
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<td>Doc 739:20</td>
<td>Marjorie S. Davis, youth photos, letter contest 1918</td>
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<td>MSA 738:01</td>
<td>Spaulding High School Yearbook, 1922</td>
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<td>Doc 739:21</td>
<td>_____, Letters from Skidmore College 1946, Norwich University 1965</td>
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<td>MSA 738:01 Spaulding High School Yearbook, 1922</td>
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<td>MSA 738:02 Skidmore College Yearbook 1924</td>
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<td>MSA 738:03 _____, 1925</td>
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**IV. Miscellaneous**

| Doc 739:23 | Indianapolis Anti-Crime Crusade                                           |
| 24  | _____, miscellaneous                                                     |
| 25  | _____, advertising folder                                                |
| 26  | Newspaper clippings, 1943-1945, Wendell Wilkie, WWII, miscellaneous      |
| 27  | Prisoners of War Conference, Paris 1971                                  |
| 28  | Prisoner of War, letter to Mrs. Patton and miscellaneous                  |
| 29  | Manuscript by “Bill,” POW with Conzelman                                 |
| 30  | Vt. Council of Safety, Marjorie Conzelman, 1942 and 1943                 |
| 31  | _____, ____ , 1944                                                       |
| 32  | West Point Alumni & Widows, Class of 1926, Clair M. Conzelman             |
| 33  | Art Shows and paintings                                                   |
| 34  | National League of America Pen Women, Inc.                                |
| 35  | Wood Art Gallery Show, 1961                                               |

| MSA 724:01 | Photo, writing paper, passports, miscellaneous 1946-1993               |
| 02  | Marjorie photographs, miscellaneous                                      |
| 03  | Republican Party, Ronald Reagan portrait, Reagan visit                  |
| 04  | Vermont Republican Women                                                  |
| 05  | Gov. Deane C. Davis, campaign, inaugural plans, schedules                |
| 06  | Letters to Deane & Marjorie Davis, 1970-1980                            |
| 07  | _____, 1981-1989                                                         |
| 08  | Deane C. Davis, personal memorabilia, reunion 1979, miscellaneous         |
| 09  | Deane C. & Marjorie S. Davis Christmas cards and letters                 |
| 10  | Deane C. Davis daily planner, 1990                                       |

**V. Audiotapes**

<p>| M-418 | Christmas at Greeley’s, 1983, Pat singing and others, Side A             |
| M-419 | Debby’s letter to the President                                         |
| M-420 | Vermont Symphony, Barre Opera House, D. C. Davis Night, Conti et al.    |
| M-421 | Vermont Symphony, St. Johnsbury annual Christmas concert 12-10-83, Charles Conti, tenor |</p>
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<td>M-422</td>
<td>Concert, unidentified, Side 1</td>
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<td>M-423</td>
<td>Recital by Robert &amp; Marilyn at our 50th Aug 15, Montpelier, Side A</td>
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<td>Speaking, Side B</td>
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<td>M-424</td>
<td>Ruth Towne, Towne-Ayr Farm, Berlin, Vt., Side 1</td>
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<td>Jessica Swift (Mrs. Charles Swift, niece of Joseph Battel), Middlebury Side 2</td>
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<td>M-425</td>
<td>Jessica Swift, original tape</td>
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<td>M-426</td>
<td>Kennedy, Chappaquiddick, 1969</td>
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<td>M-427</td>
<td>Governor Deane C. Davis speech, Republication Dinner, 3 Oct. 1970</td>
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<td>M-428</td>
<td>Crime Commission, 19 October 1971, Side 1 and Side 2</td>
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<td>M-429</td>
<td>WCAX radio 24 October 1977</td>
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<td>M-430</td>
<td>Republican Convention, 1984, Tape #1, Side 1 and Side 2</td>
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Judeen Barwood
DavisMarjorie.doc