

Guide to the Reuben L. and Marcionella V. Curtiss Papers

MS 853



compiled by Susan Grigg and Françoise Rosset

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 853

CREATOR: Curtiss, Reuben Lucius, 1897-1978

TITLE: Reuben L. and Marcionella V. Curtiss papers

DATES: 1942-1979

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Correspondence between Reuben L. and Marcionella V. Curtiss during World War II when each was serving in the United States Army make up the bulk of the papers. Reuben L. Curtiss's letters are sent from various parts of the United States, Africa, India, and China. Marcionella V. Curtiss's letters reflect her service in Australia, New Guinea and the Philippine Islands. There is also a diary kept by Reuben L. Curtiss (1944-1945), and a biographical sketch written by Marcionella V. Curtiss in 1979.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0853>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0853>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Reuben L. Curtiss, 1975.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Reuben L. and Marcionella V. Curtiss Papers (MS 853). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Date	Event
1897	○ born in North Branford, Connecticut
[c. 1909]	○ left school after the sixth grade
[1910s]-1942	○ held various jobs in New York City and Connecticut
1933	○ married Marcionella Vegas
1938	○ bought a campsite in Milford, Connecticut, and began living there except in the winters
1940	○ built a cabin on the Milford campsite and made it the Curtisses' permanent home
1942	○ joined the United States Army
1943-1945	○ served in India and China, supervising transport of American war materiel
1945	○ left the army
1945-[late 1950s]	○ held various jobs in Connecticut
1952	○ fathered a son, Scott Dewitt
1978	○ died in the Veterans Administration Medical Center in West Haven, Connecticut
MARCIONELLA LILLYAN (VEGAS) CURTISS SMITH (1906-)	
1914	○ born in Forteleza, Brazil, of American-born parents
1917	○ came to live in New York
[late 1920s]	○ attended junior high school and one month of business school
[early 1930s]	○ worked as a "girl friday" for Reuben Curtiss and attended high school in the evenings
1933	○ married Reuben Curtiss
1933-1942	○ held various jobs in New York City and Connecticut

MARCIONELLA LILLYAN (VEGAS) CURTISS SMITH (1906-)

- 1942 ○ joined the United States Army
- 1944-1945 ○ served in Australia, New Guinea, and the Philippines
- 1945 ○ left the army
- 1945-1952 ○ held various jobs in Connecticut
- 1952 ○ gave birth to a son, Scott Dewitt
- [late 1950s-late
1960s] ○ held various jobs in Connecticut
- 1968 ○ separated from Reuben Curtiss and went to live with his nephew, Leland Smith
- 1971 ○ moved to the Southwest
- 1978 ○ married Leland Smith

Scope and Contents

The Reuben L. and Marcionella V. Curtiss Papers consist mainly of correspondence between Mr. and Mrs. Curtiss during their service in the United States Army in the Second World War. Mr. Curtiss wrote his letters mainly from army posts in the United States (September 1942-July 1943) and from India and China (August 1943-June 1945). Mrs. Curtiss wrote her letters from Milford, Connecticut (September-November 1942), from army posts in the United States (December 1942-June 1944), and from Australia, New Guinea, and the Philippines (June 1944-June 1945). The correspondence is most valuable for its descriptions and criticisms of army life and of the people and customs of the places in which the Curtisses were stationed. There is also a diary kept by Mr. Curtiss between February 1944 and December 1945.

The essential biographical source is a 3000-word letter that Mrs. Curtiss (now married to Leland Smith) wrote in February 1979 at the invitation of this department. It is boxed at the beginning of the papers. It not only provides information about parentage, schooling, employment, and the like, but also creates a vivid and moving impression of "Curt & Marcy - Their Life Together." This letter is essential to a full appreciation of the papers. For quick reference, however, please see the chronology selected from it in the Biographical Sketch above.

Collection Contents

Inventory, 1942-1945, 1979

2.5' (6 boxes)

The Reuben L. and Marcionella V. Curtiss Papers were given to Yale University Library by Reuben L. Curtiss in 1975.

b. 1	Marcionella V. Curtiss: biographical letter	1979
b. 1	Reuben L. Curtiss: diary	1944 February-1945 December
RLC to MVC		
b. 1	Fort Devens, Mass.	1942 September 1-4
b. 1	Atlantic City, N.J.	1942 September 6-24
b. 1	Madison, Wis.	1942 September 27-December 19
b. 1	en route to Florida	1942 December 19-22
b. 1	Boca Raton, Fla	1942 December 25-1943 February 7
b. 1	Las Vegas, N.M.	1943 February 8- March 31
b. 2	Las Vegas, N.M.	1943 April 1-10
b. 2	Billings, Mont.	1943 April 12- July 7
b. 2	Boca Raton, Fla.	1943 July 11-13
b. 2	Africa (en route to India)	1943 July 15-23
b. 2	Africa and Middle East (en route to India)	1943 July 24-31
b. 2	India (Karachi)	1943 August 1- October 13
b. 2	India (Chabua, Assam?)	1943 October 28-1944 February 24
b. 2	India (Ledo, Assam?)	1944 February 24-March 31
b. 3	India (Calcutta)	1944 April 1- September 9

RLC to MVC (continued)

b. 3	India (Panitola, Assam)	1944 September 16-27
b. 3	Kunming, China	1944 September 30-1945 February 28
b. 4	Kunming, China	1945 March 1- May 17
b. 4	Kunming, China, and Calcutta, India	1945 May 18- June 16
b. 4	New Haven, Conn.	1945 July 25-27
MVC to RLC		
b. 4	Milford, Conn.	1942 September 1-November 27
b. 4	en route to Iowa	1942 November 28-29
b. 4	Des Moines, Iowa	1942 December 2-1943 January 30
b. 4	Fort Knox, Ky.	1943 February 1-28
b. 5	Fort Knox, Ky.	1943 March 2-1944 April 19
b. 5	Milford, Conn.	1944 April 23-26
b. 6	Fort Oglethorpe, Ga.	1944 May 1-26
b. 6	en route to California	1944 May 29-31
b. 6	California (San Francisco?)	1944 June 2-7
b. 6	<i>en route</i> to Australia English	1944 [June 8-25?]
b. 6	Brisbane, Australia	1944 June 26- October 22
b. 6	New Guinea	1944 November 4-1945 January 28
b. 6	en route to the Philippines	1945 [February 1-7?]
b. 6	Philippines	1945 February 8- April 7
b. 6	Philippines (Manila)	1945 April 17- June 4

MVC to RLC (continued)

b. 6

Clippings

undated

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

World War, 1939-1945 -- United States

Geographic Names

Asia

Genres / Formats

Diaries

Occupations

Soldiers

Names

Curtiss, Reuben Lucius, 1897-1978

Smith, Marcionella Lillyan Vegas Curtiss, 1906-