

Seegelken, Marie Katherine and Oliver E. Seegelken papers

Marie Katherine and Oliver E. Seegelken papers

1918-1943

Title Statement

Seegelken, Marie Katherine and Oliver E. Seegelken papersGuide to the Marie Katherine and Oliver E. Seegelken papers MS 00389

Author: William & Mary Special Collections Research Center staff.

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS 00389

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/1404

Unit Date

1918-1943

Unit Date

1934

Language

English

Creator

Seegelken, Marie Katherine

Creator

Seegelken, Oliver

Extent

0.20 Linear Feet 1 half Hollinger box and one oversize flat file

Repository

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access:

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Acquisition Information:

The collection was purchased with the assistance of the Clarice Garrison Quasi Fund.

Preferred Citation:

Marie Katherine and Oliver E. Seegelken papers, Special Collections Research Center, William & Mary Libraries.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Marie Katherine and Oliver Seegelken consist of a 1934 diary of the couple's South American sea voyage kept by Marie Seegelken, and of love letters between husband and wife, 1918, 1943, and undated. During WWI, Oliver Seegelken served in the USNRF (United States Naval Reserve Force) in San Pedro, California.

The diary is filled not only with an account of each day, but with hand-drawn illustrations of passengers, crew, and ports. Marie Seegelken also wrote vignettes of the passengers and jotted down ideas for short stories based on overheard conversations and ship intrigue. The sea voyage took place on the SS Santa Catalina and SS Santa Elena (both Grace Line) and a passenger list, a farewell dinner menu, and a humorous certificate are included with the diary.

Keywords

Diaries
Drawings (visual works)
Letters (correspondence)
Love-letters
Menus
Printed ephemera
Ships' passenger lists
Latin America--Description and travel
El Salvador--Description and travel
Guatemala--Description and travel
Honduras--Description and travel
Mexico--Description and travel
Nicaragua--Description and travel
Ocean liners--American--1930-1940
Ocean travel--1930-1940
Panama--Description and travel
SS Santa Catalina (Steamship)
SS Santa Elena (Steamship)
Women travelers--Diaries
Grace Line

Arrangement

Collection is arranged alphabetically by title at the file level.

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence

Unit ID id237497

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136234

Unit Date Circa 1918-1943

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 1 (Folder)

Drawings

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/607181

Mixed Materials Small collections oversized box 15 (box)

Container 2 (Folder)

Mexico Diary

Unit ID id237501

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136235

Unit Date 1934

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 2014.083.A1 (Artifact)

Scope and Contents

The following information was provided by the seller and has not been verified for accuracy: "Written by Marie K. Seegelken while on a trip to Mexico aboard the S.S. Santa Catalina with her husband, Oliver. Marie is a very social woman and a keen observer to boot. She loves to draw and write, and she provides the reader with chatty fast paced entries regarding her interactions with other passengers, filled with observations upon their backgrounds, and any little idiosyncrasies she notices. On board she chats with Frances Parkinson Keyes, noted playwright and authoress, who was working on her next novel. She meets a powerful Mexican General who had attended the Geneva Convention and was supposedly friendly with Mussolini. She and her husband dine with the captain and attend dances and concerts with other passengers, some of whom she finds interesting enough to draw their portraits. In some entries she provides details regarding fishing trips in which they catch shark. On one occasion she writes that the men caught a 12 foot Tiger Shark, 'a real man eating specimen - lots of blood & strong odor - has stripes that classifies it as a tiger shark.' Accompanying this she provides a full page drawing of the shark hanging from a hook on board the ship. "She draws sketches of the crew while they are performing various duties around the ship. And she is amused enough by them, that she captures their leisure activities as well, including a rendezvous by the stevedores on the lower deck. They go on to the mainland of Mexico and visit Manzanillo, Acapulco, Gulf of Tehemtepec, San Miguel, Corinto Cutuco, Mazatlan, Santa Elena, Salvador and Champerica. She draws several cityscapes of these towns as seen from the ship. She provides a wonderful drawing of a street singer in Acapulco sitting atop a horse with a guitar slung over his back and wearing a broad sombrero. In her entries she writes of her adventures in these towns providing her impressions of their conditions and their inhabitants. Of Manzanillo she writes: 'Have been in another world. . . Manzanillo is a lost world - so far removed from our civilization that is incredible. The filth and squalor of the little town itself defies description. In the glare of daylight it is an unholy sight yet curiously interesting. Burros and oxen drawn carts the only means of conveyance - the children half naked & caked with dirt followed us about wide-eyed with wonder. Suffocating stench in the market place - men asleep stretched out on streets - emaciated dogs fighting over a filthy bone - somewhere down the line a peons' voice drawing out a melancholy strain the accompaniment of a rusty guitar - now & then a pair of 'Jezabels' in long brilliant colored silk dresses - casting insidious looks - the money exchange where we waited twenty minutes while a sluggish employee battled with a broken-down safe deposit. 'Later a trip to the Hacienda Santiago in a jungle setting that surpassed anything I might have imagined. Rode out in an ancient vehicle that might have once been an automobile - through an impenetrable jungle. Two natives stood hanging on to the side of the car & slashed the vegetation with their ____ huge knives that they carry in magnificent leather cases at their side. The Hacienda is about eight miles out of Manzanillo - looks like a

cannibal village. Desolate - primitive & a little awesome. Thatched huts made of palms crowded together - strange faces peering out at us - the men handsome & colorful in their native dress of white with scarlet sashes - the women carrying great loads on their heads. Went into one of the huts - crowded with children - all naked - chickens & pigs sharing the same space. The distant roar of thunder & the booming of the surf - thick dark threatening sky - heavy sweet smell of tropical growths - damp humid feeling in the air. Walked through some of the jungle - picked limes & gathered cocoa nuts - about the size of Brazil nuts, very tasty. Later went down to the beach & watched the sunset... saw some water scorpions & strange sea animal life - so wasn't tempted to go in. The spot was glorious though- we might have been on another planet - not a sign of human life for miles - great towering mountains jutting out of the sea - now & then the piercing cry of strange jungle birds. . . ' "

General

Diary entitled "The Self Book," is enclosed in a box entitled "Mexico Diary, 1934"

Printed ephemera related to the 1934 ocean voyage

Unit ID id237506

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/136236

Unit Date 1934

Mixed Materials 1 (box)

Container 3 (Folder)

Scope and Contents

Menu, passenger list, certificate.