

OBJECT NARRATIVE

Three Stories from the Larsen Archives



PNCA THESIS
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Introduction

Artifacts of the past connect us to their time and its people. That connective power increases when an artifact is experienced with all our senses. Unfamiliar textures and patterns, musty odors, dry crinkling sounds of opening and unfolding, a sense of “realness” and authenticity—these can only be experienced with the artifact in hand.

This catalog presents an inventory of a cabinet exhibited at the Pacific Northwest College of Art Thesis Exhibition in 2005. The cabinet housed three collections of objects and documents which the viewer was invited to physically explore. Each collection represented a story set in a previous time, an open-ended narrative which the visitor was encouraged to interpret by handling, inspecting, opening, unfolding, paging through, and pondering any and all items that they wished.

The multi-sensory qualities of the artifacts can't be duplicated within the pages of a book, so their presentation in this volume does not attempt to replicate the ineffable exhibit experience. Instead, the details of the collection are documented for posterity. As the collector, the process of cataloguing has provided me the opportunity to approach these objects with fresh eyes and, in most cases, the process has revealed previously unnoticed details.

I have described the collection as objectively as possible. Aside from their order and grouping, I have tried not to impose my own sense of their narrative. I hope that the reader's imagination might be provoked by these artifacts and their many possible stories.

Abigail Larsen, 2005

Collection

A

DRAWER A.1

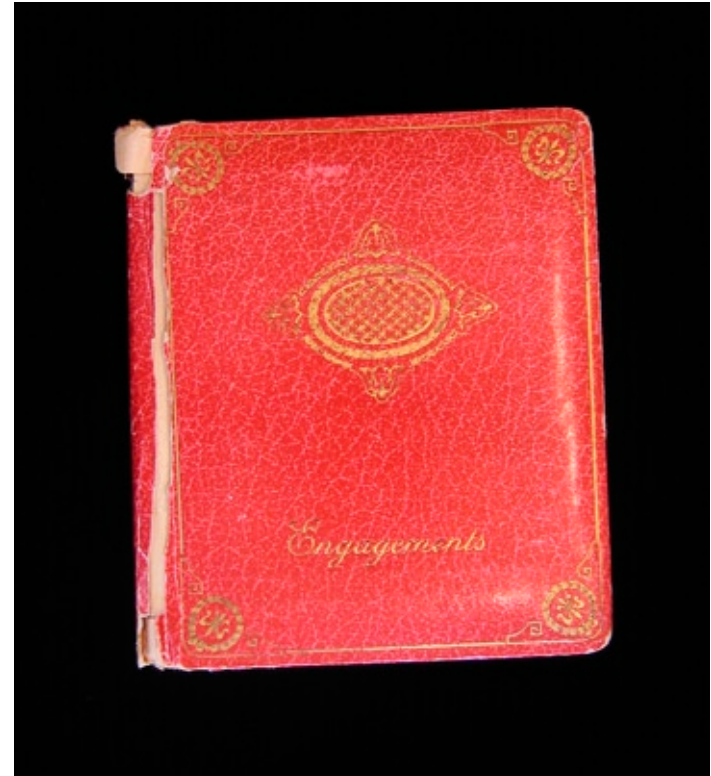
JOURNAL

Date: 1928–1929 C.E.
Measurements: 4 $\frac{1}{6}$ " × 4 $\frac{1}{6}$ "

Hardcover. Leather grained paper cover, gold-tone printed border and decoration. Titled, "Engagements." Cover split along length of spine. Printed endpapers. Written in ink on free end paper, "May Bess Downing, Private!!! KEEP OUT!!!!" "Germany" stamped on inside cover, "F95541" written in pencil in upper right corner of title page. Entries on all 80 pages penciled in minuscule cursive. Paints vivid picture of high school student's social life in late 1920s. First entry,

Sept 1/8:00/Went out with Ralkowksi had a keen time saw B.
S. with a terrible Dolores Jenkins went to Pig.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON
Catalog No. 963



DRAWER A.1

SILVER LEAF

Date: CA. LATE 19TH—EARLY 20TH CENTURY C.E.

Measurements: 2 $\frac{7}{16}$ " × 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Leaf-shaped paper cutout with embossed veining. Silver ink or foil on obverse, plain paper on reverse. Dark tarnish on edges.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 984



DRAWER A.2

KEY

Date: 19th–20th CENTURY C.E.

Measurements: bow $\frac{3}{4}$ " \times $\frac{5}{16}$ ", 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ " long

Cast metal skeleton key. Granular texture. Some pitting, rust. Small fissure on bow.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 985



DRAWER A.3

PHOTOGRAPHIC NEGATIVE

Date: CA. 1929 C.E.

Measurements: 4 $\frac{1}{16}$ " \times 2 $\frac{25}{32}$ "

Reverse. Black and white negative. Exterior. Two young adult white female figures, one apparently white male figure. Female figures seated on fenders of Model T Ford. License plate reads, "Oregon - 1929/315-008." "AAA" plaque on grill. Left female wears chin-length hairstyle parted on side, legs crossed, hands in lap. Right female wears chin-length hairstyle parted in center, knees and feet together, hands on knees. Both wear knee-length skirts, sleeveless tops, cuffed socks, laced oxford-style shoes. Standing male figure faces right, cropped by right side of frame, sleeves rolled, right hand in trouser pocket. Tree-lined dirt road extends back and out left side of picture frame.

Obverse. Clouded by numerous fingerprints.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 988



DRAWER A.4

BOOKLET

Date: CA. 1929 C.E.

Measurements: 4½" × 6"

Front Cover: Horizontal stripe, title and author on front cover printed in dark blue. Neo-classical illustration printed in medium blue. "Your Dowry of Beauty by Dorothy Gray."

Back Cover: Printed in dark blue. Illustration of Dorothy Gray edifice, "Dorothy Gray Building/Fifth Avenue/New York/Model Grocery Co. Pasadena, Calif."

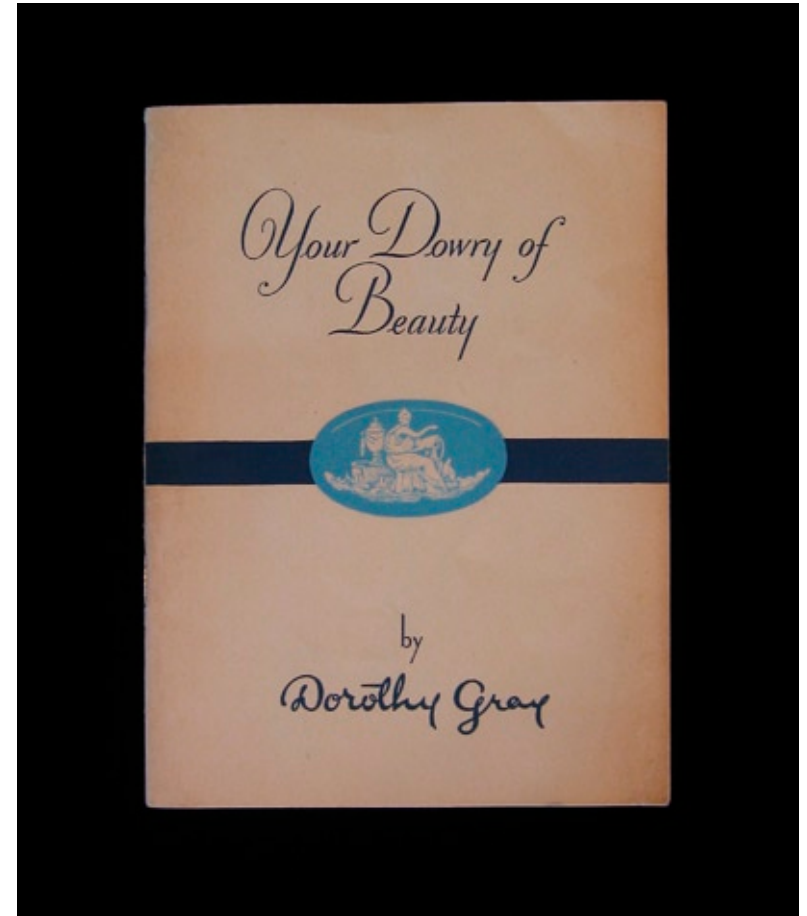
Interior: Black and white photos. Copy touts Dorothy Gray beauty products. Sample,

Every woman in the public eye is continually subjected to the scrutiny of the press. Much has been written about Dorothy Gray and her methods, and I propose, in really explaining them, to tell you a little about my own personal self,—but only in so far as it will show the reasons that underlie the science of my treatments.

Saddle-stitched, 48 pages. Paper cover.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 987



DRAWER A.5

MATCHBOX

Date: EARLY 20TH CENTURY C.E.

Measurements: 1¹/₁₆" × 1¹/₄" × 7¹/₁₆"

Miniature matchbox with wraparound label printed in black, pink, and grey. "La Petite/Safety Matches/Made In Sweden." Two matchstrike areas. Contains 26 wooden matches with bright pink heads.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 986



DRAWER A.6

BUSINESS CARD

Date: EARLY—MIDDLE 20TH CENTURY C.E.

Measurements: 1 3/4" × 3 1/4"

Card printed with black ink, "Any request will be gladly complied with./Eved Oliver/Pianist/The Huts." Pink stain all over card, concentrated along edges and corners.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 989



Collection

B

DRAWER B.1

CARD

Date: LATE 19TH—EARLY 20TH CENTURY C.E.

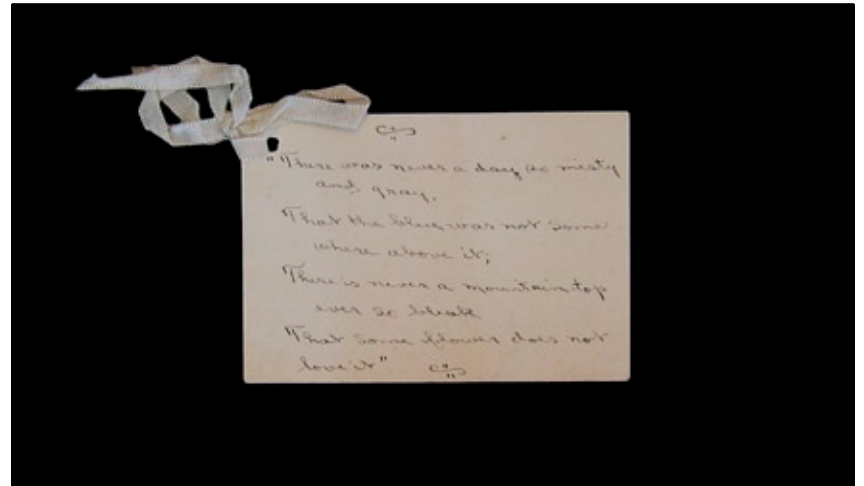
Measurements: 2 ³/₁₆" × 3 ⁵/₁₆"

Hole punched in upper left corner, tied with bow of white satin ribbon. Handwritten poem, faded black ink on card.

There was never a day so misty and gray, That the blue was not some
where above it; There is never a mountain-top
ever so bleak
That some flower does not
love it"

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 990



DRAWER B.2

PHOTOGRAPH

Date: CA. 1910–1925 C.E.

Measurements: 5²³/₃₂" × 3¹/₂"

Exterior, very bright. Black and white photograph, female child standing by stucco wall (porch). Wall top outlined with brick, surmounted by wooden beams. Fallen leaves, patchy grass in foreground. Child wears shiny tunic with appliquéd flowers, matching knee length bloomers, stockings, maryjane shoes. Child squints, raises right hand.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 991



DRAWER B.3

REPORT CARD

Date: CA. 1936 C.E.

Measurements: 8¾" × 3¾"

Bi-fold paper document. Printed in black ink. Handwritten entries in faded black ink.

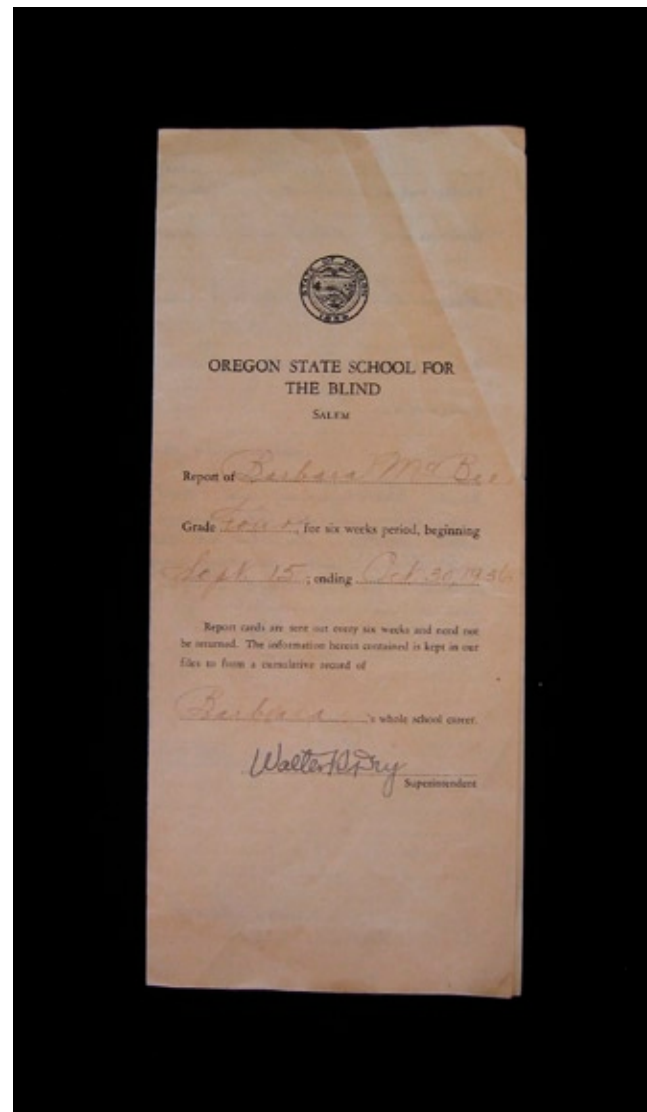
Obverse. Oregon state seal at top. "Oregon State School for the Blind/Salem/Report of Barbara McBee /Grade Four, for six weeks period beginning Sept. 15; ending Oct. 30, 1936/Report cards are sent out every six weeks and need not be returned. The information herein contained is kept in our files to form a cumulative record of: Barbara's whole school career./Walter R. Dry Superintendent."

Interior. "Barbara is doing Excellent work in Reading/Good work in Chorus, Arithmetic, History, Gym/Average in Braille Writing, Geography, Nature Study/Poor work in Spelling, Sewing...conduct in general is average/Remarks: Barbara is not really bad but inclined to be very noisy and forgetful. She often fails to settle down to work at the task assigned her. She does not seem to realize that she is growing up and is capable of taking some responsibility for herself./health is good/Weight 89¾."

Reverse. List of school staff.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 992



DRAWER B.4

NOTE

Date: CA. 1936 C.E.

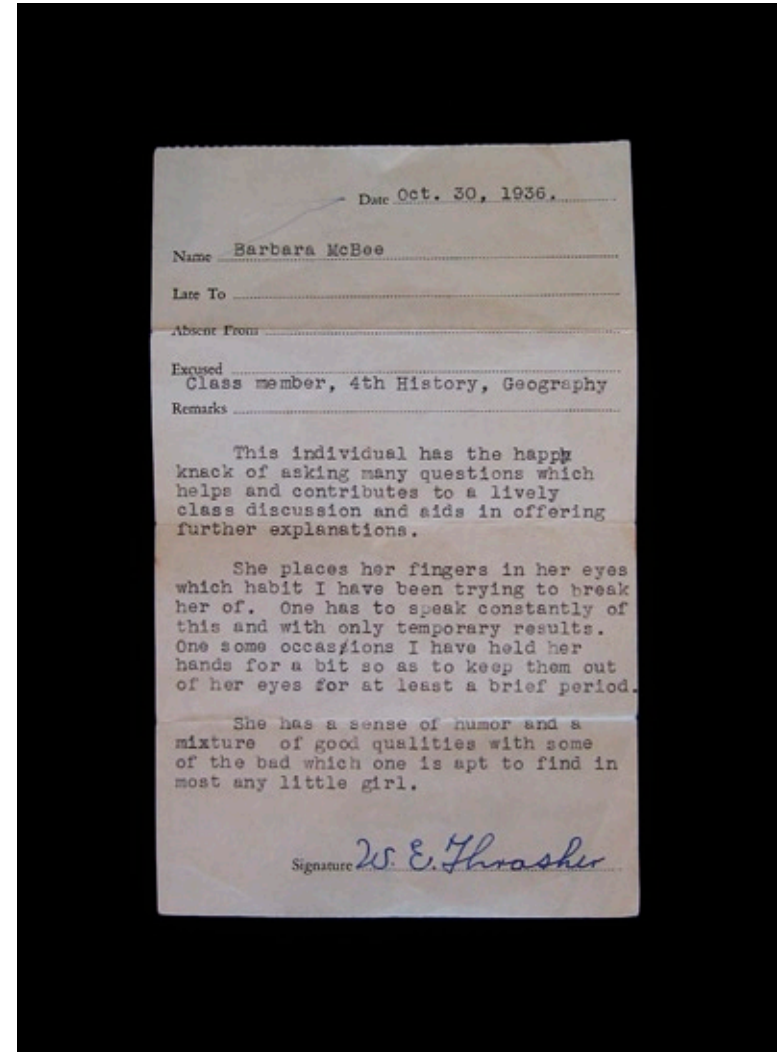
Measurements: 6 ¹¹/₁₆" × 4 ¹/₈"

Form printed in black ink, typed in black ink. Signed with dark blue ink. "Date: Oct. 30, 1936/Name: Barbara McBee...Class member, 4th History, Geography."

Remarks: This individual has the happy [sic] knack of asking many questions which helps and contributes to a lively class discussion and aids in offering further explanations. She places her fingers in her eyes which habit I have been trying to break her of. One has to speak constantly of this and with only temporary results. One [sic] some occasions [sic] I have held her hands for a bit so as to keep them out of her eyes for at least a brief period. She has a sense of humor and a mixture of good qualities with some of the bad which one is apt to find in most any little girl. Signature: W. E. Thrasher.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 992



DRAWER B.5

PHOTOGRAPH

Date: EARLY 20TH CENTURY C.E.

Measurements: 4 $\frac{1}{32}$ " × 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ "

Obverse. Exterior, very bright. Black and white photograph with white border. Young female figure holds wood and paper parasol, sits on cloth laid on grassy lawn. Figure has dark bobbed hair, wears short-sleeved white dress. Brick wall and large window in background.

Reverse. Handwritten text, "To the Dearest Mumsey in all the World/To my New Dad and to My Sweet Sister From your Frenchman."

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 993



DRAWER B.6

PLAYING CARD

Date: MID-20TH CENTURY C.E.

Measurements: 3 ¹⁵/₃₂" × 2 ¹⁵/₃₂"

Ace of spades. "Bee" brand with Braille letters.

Obverse. Card printed in black ink. Illustration of bees, beehive and flowers. Text reads, "Bee'/Reg. U.S. Pat. Off./Consolidated-Dougherty/-92-/Made in U.S.A./Souvenir of Harolds Club — Reno [upside-down]." "D3316" at very bottom in medium blue ink.

Reverse. Criss-cross pattern printed in dark blue ink.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 995



Collection

C

DRAWER C.1

ENVELOPE WITH SIX PIECES

Probable Date: CA. 1930–1940 C.E.

Measurements: 4½" × 9½"

Envelope, Reverse. Pull tab reads, "Pull out for postal inspection."

Envelope, Obverse. Postmarked "Chicago, Ill." with no date. Brown postage stamp with portrait of Warren G. Harding reads, "United States Postage/1½ cents/Harding." Addressee information typed onto perforated label affixed with adhesive, "Jasper Longcar Jr. 15237/4131 S.E. Grant St./Portland, Ore." Return address and logo printed in black: "Towertown Studios/320 North Michigan Avenue/Chicago." Logo features skyscrapers and two female heads.

Customer testimonials. Black ink. Example,

Mr. L. H. G., Chapin, Illinois says enthusiastically, "I have landed a job with big salary. I owe it all to Towertown Studios."

Flyer. "You [sic] too, can draw beautiful girls." Photo of 1930s nude model, drawing of photo, call to action. Black, yellow and red ink.

Money Back Guarantee. Green ornamental border, black text.

Free Trial Enrollment. Written on back, "15237." Black and red ink.

Return Envelope. Printed in black ink. Adhesive activated, envelope sealed. "Towertown Studios/320 North Michigan Avenue/Chicago, Ill./Laura H. Holland, Registrar."

Letterhead. From Laura H. Holland of Towertown Studios. Black logo, mimeographed copy.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog Number: 953



DRAWER C.2

PHOTOGRAPH

Probable Date: CA. 1930–1950 C.E.

Measurements: 3 1/8" × 3 1/2"

Exterior black and white photograph with white border and decorative edge. Two white male figures, approximately 30–45 years, unidentified beach in background. Seated figure on right wears short-sleeved printed shirt, creased trousers of medium tone, mouth open as if smiling or talking, arms engaged in activity outside frame.

Standing figure on left holds small movie camera to right eye, left foot propped on arched concrete barrier bisecting photo. Standing figure wears light-colored trousers, light-colored short-sleeved shirt, dark belt, two-tone shoes with light-colored soles. Watch visible on left wrist. Hair windblown, balding. Three indistinct figures in background, near three inverted V-shaped structures.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 954



DRAWER C.3

PHOTOGRAPH

Probable Date: CA. 1935–1945 C.E.
Measurements: 2 $\frac{7}{16}$ " × 3 $\frac{3}{16}$ "

Obverse. Borderless, sepia-tone. Young adult asian male wears dark pinstriped suit jacket with peaked lapels, light collared shirt, dark windowpane tie with tiebar, and small pin near buttonhole in left lapel. Hair neatly parted in center and brushed back. Misprinting along right edge of photograph.

Reverse. "MC 269 Natsimaga (Roy)" written in pencil.

Source: ESTATE SALE
PORTLAND, OREGON
Catalog No. 954

PHOTOGRAPH

Probable Date: CA. 1935–1945 C.E.
Measurements: 2 $\frac{7}{16}$ " × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Obverse. Borderless, sepia-tone. Young adult white male wears dark pullover sweater over light color collared shirt. Hair parted on left, brushed to side.
Reverse. "MC 223 Collier Charles" written in pencil.

Source: ESTATE SALE
PORTLAND, OREGON
Catalog No. 955



DRAWER C.4

CELLULOID DISK

Probable Date: 1943 C.E.

Measurements: 2¼" diameter

Obverse. Handwritten in dark ink, "Early Chow/Commissary Store/October 1943/W.C. Mundy."

Reverse. Traces of adhesive and torn paper. Hole (⅜") threaded with 12" length of natural fiber cord.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 958



DRAWER C.4

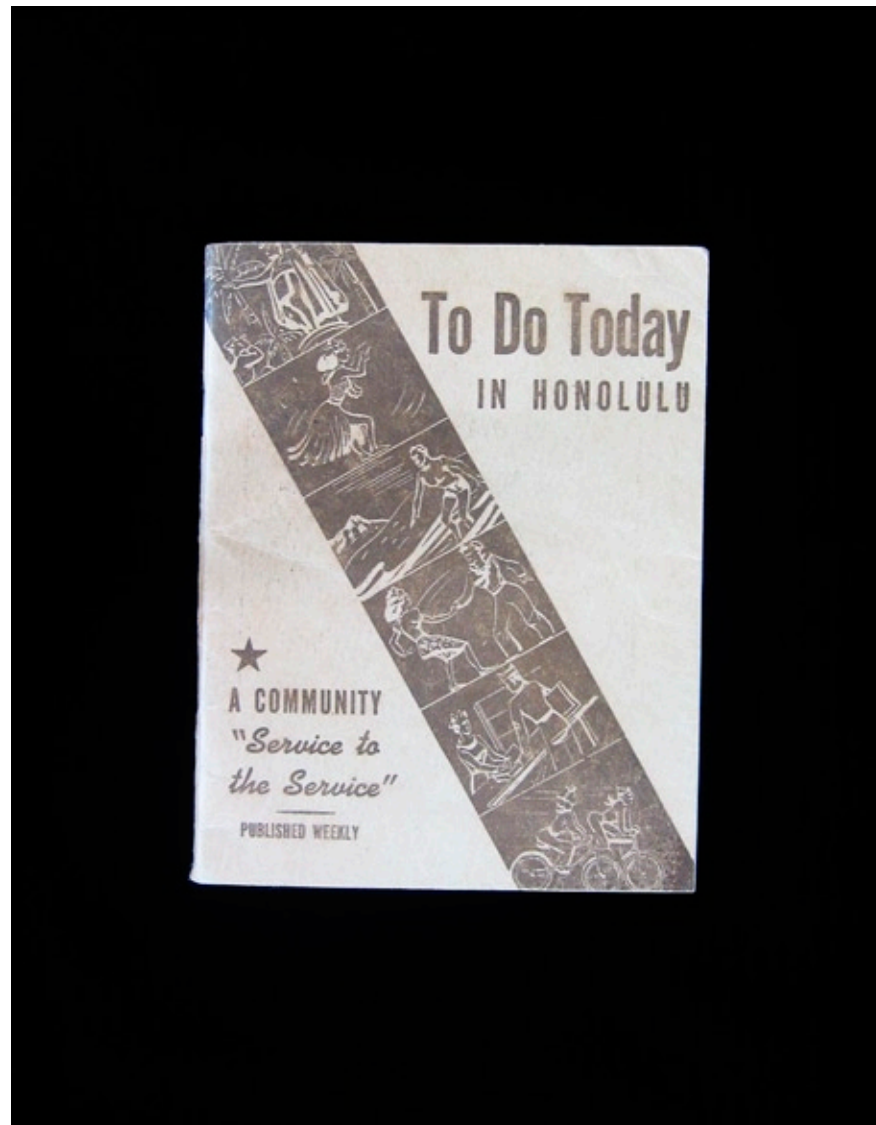
BOOKLET

Probable Date: 1944 C.E.
Measurements: 4¼" × 5½"

Saddle-stitched kraft paper cover printed with brown ink. Front cover reads, "To Do Today in Honolulu/A Community 'Service to the Service' /Published Weekly." Sixty-four pages printed in black ink. Tourist guide tailored for servicemen, week of January 22–January 29, 1944. Published by Louise W. and George T. Armitage. Sample copy,

Today seems to be a natural for dining and dancing—and in the grand manner. The USO Army & Navy Club is having a formal which means the island wahines will blossom out in long and swishy gowns, leis, and flowers over the ear. Irresistible, Mac!

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON
Catalog No. 959



DRAWER C.5

PHOTOGRAPH

Probable Date: CA. 1940–1945 C.E.

Measurements: 4" × 5 ½"

Obverse. Exterior black and white photograph. Coastline, island in background. Sailboat on unidentified body of water. Male figure stands on prow.

Reverse. "1940" stamped in black ink.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 982



DRAWER C.5

CLAIM RECORD

Probable Date: CA. 1945-1950 C.E.

Measurements: 2 $\frac{1}{16}$ " x 4"

Veterans readjustment claim record for Jasper W. Longcor, Jr. Issued by State Unemployment Compensation Commission, Salem, Oregon. Trifold, orange card printed with black ink. Log partially filled. No definite year in entries. Staple in center of third leaf. Stamped "E. O. 5 Portland, Ore" in red ink.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 960



DRAWER C.6

PHOTOGRAPH

Probable Date: CA. 1945–1955 C.E.

Measurements: 2½" × 3¾"

Obverse. Interior black and white instant photograph with white border and attached perforated tab. Two adult white female figures. Face of left figure obscured and blurry, right figure looks down and back. Both have short, wavy hairstyles. Both wear white blouses, plaid “bottoms”—right figure wears shorts, left figure “wears” plaid shirt (possibly—collar and sleeve identifiable). Right figure lifts plaid shirt on one side, revealing left figure’s undergarment. Left figure holds left arm across belly, right hand conceals pubic region with dubious plaid garment. Rack of clothing cropped by left side of frame. Foremost garment torn. Mirror reflects photographic flash, lampshade, curtains. *Reverse.* “Polaroid” along left edge, “37” in upper left corner, “1” in upper right corner.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 962



DRAWER C.6

INVITATION

Probable Date: C.A. 1945–1955 C.E.

Measurements: 3 ³/₁₆" × 5 ¹/₂"

Obverse. Black ink on green paper, felt finish. Torn along top edge.

Surprise/ (Keep it a Secret)/it would help to make the occasion a success if you would drop in Saturday night, March thirtieth and share a toast with us to Alda's Birthday/4203 S. E. Ninth Avenue/9:00–12:00.

Reverse. Faint mirrored imprint of obverse copy superimposed over faint imprint of right-reading obverse copy.

Source: ESTATE SALE, PORTLAND, OREGON

Catalog No. 983





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