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#5 Bissell, Jewell Myers (1901-1948) Collection, ca. 1907-1923, 1970
10 folders

RESTRICTED

INTRODUCTION

A collection of materials relating to Jewell Bissell, a native of Cherokee County, Kansas. The collection consists of a memoir of her childhood, artwork, photographs, letters, and a graduation announcement.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Jewell Myers Bissell Collection was donated to the Leonard H. Axe Library of Pittsburg State University by Glenn D. Bissell and John Bissell on 24 August 1998.

RESTRICTIONS

The donors retain all rights of publication of the materials in the Jewell Myers Bissell Collections. The Collection is open for research within the limits of fair use.

BIOLOGICAL SKETCH

Jewell Evangeline Myers was born at the home of her parents, Matilda and John Lane Myers, on June 18, 1901. She lived on her parent's farm near Weir, Kansas; graduated from the College High School in Pittsburg, Kansas; and received her B.S. degree in 1923 from the Kansas State Teachers College of Pittsburg, now Pittsburg State University. Following her graduation, Jewell was a teacher in Kansas public schools. She was married to Everett S. Bissell of Pittsburg on June 24, 1924. Jewell Myers Bissell died at her home in Rochester, New York, on August 3, 1948.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Jewell Myers Bissell Collection consists of a memoir of her childhood, artwork, photographs, letters, and a graduation announcement.

Memoir

The unpublished memoir, titled "Growing Up in Kansas", consists of 182 typed pages plus eight illustrative sketches. The manuscript contains a title page, dedication, table of contents, introduction and eighteen topical chapters. It recounts the author's childhood in Cherokee County, Kansas, from about 1907 to 1920. The manuscript is useful for understanding life in rural southeast Kansas and provides insights to local customs, church history, and social relationships. The eight sketches were drawn by the author.

The **Introduction** describes the Myers' 160 acre farm and the geography of the southeast Kansas and southwest Missouri regions. It briefly mentions mining activities, area churches and schools, and nearby towns. The author notes that the events recorded are factual, but most personal names have been changed.

Chapter One is titled **Covered Wagon**. It describes how a freeze in May of 1907 destroyed most of the farm's fruit and crops. It recounts how the family traveled by covered wagon to the home of relatives in Missouri where they were able to obtain fruit and vegetables for the following year.

Chapter Two is titled **The Revival Meeting**. The author discusses the dress, habits, and oratorical skills of various ministers and itinerant preachers. The focus of the chapter is upon the events of a two-week revival service held about 1907.

Chapter Three is titled **Old Settler's Reunion**. The author remembers the people and activities of an annual celebration held each August on the Columbus, Kansas, reunion grounds. She describes the week-long event that included a carnival and agricultural exhibits. She also notes the reasons for the demise of this popular event by the time of World War I.

Chapter Four, titled **Wolf Hunt**, records the author's memories of gray timber wolves, coyotes, and one community-wide hunt when she was in the eighth grade.

Chapter Five is titled **High Water**. Included is information about the variable climate of southeast Kansas that resulted in droughts and floods. The author discusses digging wells in drought seasons and the problems associated with travel during periods of high water.

Chapter Six is titled **The Rover**. The author recalls her impressions of various itinerant travelers, foreign-born peddlers, medicine men, and "gypsies".

Chapter Seven, titled **Automobile**, records how many aspects of life were altered by the advent of the automobile. The author discusses the replacement of the horse and buggy, and the end of local Anti-Horse Thief Association meetings by 1915. She also describes some of the earliest automobiles in the neighborhood and their impact upon the lives and activities of the young adults.

Chapter Eight is titled **Possums and Persimmons**. Discussed are various amusements engaged in by young people. She notes, in particular, hunting for ripe persimmons and methods of capturing possums.

Chapter Nine, titled **Bumblebees**, provides a description of farm work. It also recounts how the author was severely attacked by bumblebees when she disturbed their nest while plowing with a team of horses.

Spring River is the title of chapter ten. The author provides information about the nature of the river and descriptions of the activities associated with the grist mill near Waco, Missouri. A complete transcription of this chapter is available on the Special Collection web page.

Chapter Eleven is titled **Play Party**. This chapter provides a view of the community's mixed views on dancing and appropriate activities for young people. Included are descriptions of ice cream socials and dances. The lyrics of two songs, "Shew-Tang", and "Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines", are also included.

Chapter Twelve is titled **Watermelons** and chapter thirteen is titled **Charivaree** [sic]. The author recounts tales of "stealing" watermelons from neighborhood patches and the customs surrounding the post-wedding charivari.

Chapter Fourteen, titled **Sudden Death**, tells the story of two Cherokee County murders. The first involved a dispute over coal mining rights. The second involved the murder-suicide of an estranged husband and wife.

Chapter Fifteen is titled **Chiggers**. It discusses various remedies for chigger bites and relates several stories of the discomfort they caused.

Chapter Sixteen, titled **Little Boy**, notes how the community participated in the raising of children who were abandoned or orphaned.

Chapter Seventeen is titled **The Night the Bank Was Robbed**. A description of the Citizens Bank of Weir, Kansas, is given. The story of a robbery attempt that occurred about 1920 is recounted.

The final chapter is titled **These Things Too**. Among the topics discussed in this chapter are box suppers, pie socials, church activities during the Christmas season, and sleeping in a tent house during the heat of summer.

Miscellaneous

The collection also includes photocopies made from two photograph albums, ca. 1918-1925. The original photographs were retained by the donors. Among the images are views of the Myers and Bissell families; the Myers farm house; the Bissell family home in Pittsburg; wedding and graduation scenes; the Kansas State Teachers College in Pittsburg; friends; and World War I soldiers and nurses. Many of the images are unidentified.

Also included are two letters and an invitation to the college graduation of Jewell Myers in 1923. One letter is addressed to Jewell Myers in August 1922 and concerns her application to teach in the Carthage, Missouri, elementary schools. The second letter is addressed to the donors. It was written in June 1970 and refers to the life of Jewell Myers Bissell and other family information.

FOLDER LIST

Memoir

- f. 1 Introduction and chapter 1
- f. 2 Chapters 2-4
- f. 3 Chapters 5-7
- f. 4 Chapters 8-10
- f. 5 Chapters 11-13
- f. 6 Chapters 14-16
- f. 7 Chapter 17-18

Miscellaneous

- f. 8-9 Photographs
- f. 10 Letters and Invitation

INDEX ENTRIES

Anti-Horse Thief Association
Automobiles
Bissell family
Bissell, Jewell Myers (1901-1948)
Christmas
Churches
Crime

INDEX ENTRIES continued

Dancing
Farming
Floods
Kansas, Cherokee County
Kansas, Columbus
Kansas, Weir
Marriage
Mills and milling
Mines and mining
Missouri, Waco
Myers, John Lane
Myers, Matilda
Orphans
Pittsburg State University
Preachers
Recreation
Schools
Spring River
Wildlife
World War I