

Collection #
M 0805

BERTHA MEHRLICH SCRAPBOOKS, CA. 1896–1960

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Processed by

Jennifer Duplaga
4 December 2003

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	7 document cases
COLLECTION DATES:	ca. 1896–1960
PROVENANCE:	Olimpia Barbera, Bloomington, Indiana, 17 April 2000
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE
FORMATS:

RELATED
HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.0478

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bertha Mehrlich (1884–1962) was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, as Bertha Jasper, the daughter of Ernst and Caroline Jasper. Bertha Jasper's parents were married in 1879 in Indianapolis. Her father is shown in the 1920 Federal Census as a carpenter living in the city. He was born in Germany, his wife in Indiana.

Bertha Mehrlich performed her first piano solo at her local church in 1896. She showed little interest in continuing her lessons until she attended a children's recital at the Metropolitan School of Music in Indianapolis. She was so impressed by the experience that she found new motivation and persuaded her parents to let her attend the Metropolitan School of Music beginning in June 1900. Inspired, she started attending operas, recitals, and concerts throughout the city and started taking her practicing seriously. In 1902 she left the Metropolitan School of Music and began attending the Co-Operative Piano Teachers' Association, under the direction of her former teacher, Jeannette Crouse. It was at the cooperative that she also began giving lessons to her own pupils. She later also attended the Sherwood School of Music in New York.

After graduating from the cooperative in 1904 she continued to teach piano at the cooperative and also began performing for groups and at concerts in Indianapolis. She eventually opened her own studio in February 1920, but stopped in the early 1930s when hardships forced families to end their children's lessons to save money. In May 1933, she married Dr. John T. Mehrlich, also of Indianapolis. Bertha Mehrlich (she was also known to friends as Bertha Jasper late in life) continued to play for local churches and other groups throughout the city until illness prevented her from doing so, two years before her death in 1962.

During her life, Bertha Mehrlich was involved with many groups such as the YWCA, the National Geographic Society, and the Indianapolis Matinee Musicale.

Sources:

Information in collection.

Watson, Bess. "Bertha Mehrlich, Skilled Musician." *Indianapolis News*, Monday 21 May 1962, p. 15.

Ancestry.com. *Indiana Marriage Records Index, 1845-1920*. Provo, UT: Ancestry.com, 2000. Original Data: Works Progress Administration. *Index to Marriage Records Indiana: Indiana Works Progress Administration, 1938-1940*. Accessed 3 December 2003.

Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population. Roll T625_455, page 14B.

E-mail communication from Carol Trexler, daughter of the donor of the papers, Olimpia Barbera, 1 December 2003.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of scrapbooks created by Bertha Mehrlich from 1896 to 1960, originally bound in 22 loose-leaf binders. The folder headings indicate which loose-leaf notebooks originally housed the pages, and their order within each notebook.

The focus of the notebooks relates to Mehrlich's musical interest and includes concert and recital programs, newspaper clippings about performers, composers, and groups, such as John Phillip Sousa, Sergey Rachmaninov, Amelita Galli-Curci, and Ernestine Schumann-Heink, as well as commentary by Mehrlich about the performances she attended.

Other newspaper clippings in this collection are about some of her favorite celebrities, such as Shirley Temple, James Whitcomb Riley, Thomas Edison, and Lassie. Also in the collection are letters and cards from friends and family, napkins from celebrations, memorials, postcards from places that she visited, and photographs.

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

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2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
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4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0805).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.