

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION RECORD

RG0849.AM: Gehrke, Edward Arthur, 1880-1939, and Margaret May Patton, 1883-1978

Papers: 1909-1970, and undated

Lincoln, Lancaster County, Neb.: Travelers, photograph enthusiasts

Size: 0.5 cu. ft.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edward Arthur Gehrke was born in Seward County, Nebraska on August 24, 1880. He was the son of Edward C. Gehrke and Otilia E. Duehning and the fifth of 14 children. Edward was a successful contractor and real estate agent, and called himself the "Bungalow Man." He built an estimated 300 Craftsman-style homes in Lincoln. He also served on the board of the Lancaster County Humane Society for 16 years, the last ten as Superintendent.

Margaret May Patton, "Maggie" was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1883. At some time early in her life, she and her mother moved to Nebraska. On October 26, 1905, Margaret married Edward Gehrke. She graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1910.

The Gehrkes traveled extensively by automobile throughout the United States and Canada, after 1931 in a "house-car" of Edward's own design, which they called the "Bungie-Weck." Edward Gehrke died in 1939 at the age of 58. Margaret survived him for almost 40 years, dying in 1978 at the age of 95. She traveled only infrequently after Edward's death.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The manuscript portion of this collection consists mostly of the writings of Margaret May Patton Gehrke. It is arranged in six series: 1) Travel Journal Entries, 1909-1953; 2) Poetry; 3) Prose; 4) Quotation Journals; 5) Correspondence, 1964-1965; and 6) Miscellany.

The travel journal entries of **Series One** comprise the bulk of the collection. They were handwritten by Margaret and describe trips around the United States and Canada. The journals are complemented by 15 albums of photographs taken by Edward, which came to the Nebraska State Historical Society as part of the same donation. The photographs correspond in large part to the journal entries. Neither format should be viewed without the other, as together they capture the spirit and experiences of this unique and talented couple.

The journal entries are listed by the year and title given by the author. Ask the Reference staff for assistance with the photograph albums.

Series Two contains poetry written by Margaret Gehrke, mostly undated typescripts. A 20 page compilation [photocopied] of the typescripts is present, but it is unknown if Margaret determined the order of the poems in this copy. Many of the poems explore themes of grief and loneliness, written in the long years following Edward's death. All reveal the talent, sensitivity, wit, and

keen powers of observation that characterize Margaret's writing.

Series Three consists of a few short prose compositions by Margaret, most notably "To a Dog," written in honor of Barney, "faithful companion on a long motor trip, seven thousand miles of gypsy-trail thru the west."

The quotation journals [photocopies only] of **Series Four** are written in Margaret's hand. The quotations were taken from the works of writers, poets, philosophers, etc. whom she admired. The original journals are not in the collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Three letters to Rosalind Morris comprise **Series Five**, Correspondence.

Series Six contains miscellaneous items, including the "Gehrke Family Record" with ages, birth and death dates of Edward's parents and siblings. Also included are Edward's obituary, Maggie's instructions for her funeral, and reminiscences about Margaret by close friends, Doris Gates and Charles Stephen.

Acc. 1990.039; 1997.0107; 1997.0109; 1997.0212; 1997.0606; 2000.0872.

Note: The photo component of the collection [**RG0849.PH**] consists of approximately 2000 photographs. The majority of photos are held in 16 photo albums and tell the fascinating tale of the Gehrke's early automobile touring around the United States between 1914 and 1939. The rest of the images center around Margaret and the early years of her marriage to Edward. The touring photographs were taken primarily by Edward and should be viewed with their corresponding journal entries, written by Margaret on their travels.

In 1996-1997, the NSHS conducted several oral history interviews with friends and family of Margaret Gehrke. Those interviewed were Margaret's friends, Drs. Harold and Ellen Ball, Elden Burcham, and Edward and Margaret's niece, Frances Hutchinson. The interviews, available on audio cassette and video tape, offer interesting insight into the personalities of the Gehrkes. Ask a reference staff member for more information about the audio cassettes [**RG0849.AU**] and video tapes [**RG0849.MI**].

For additional information about the Gehrke's, see the following *Nebraska History* magazine articles:

"A Thousand Mile Motor Trip thru Western Nebraska, 1916," *Nebraska History* 1997, 78: 22-27.
"Collecting Parks," *Nebraska History* 2009, vol. 90, no. 2.

DESCRIPTION

Series 1 - Travel journal entries, 1909-1953

Box 1

Folder

1. List of entries, c. 1955
2. ["California and the West," 1909 \(PDF\)](#)
3. ["Chicago," 1910 \(PDF\)](#)
4. ["Kansas City," 1911 \(PDF\)](#)
5. ["Canada and the Northwest," 1912 \(PDF\)](#)
6. ["Cities of the East," 1914 \(PDF\)](#)
7. ["Canada and the Northwest," 1914 \(PDF\)](#)
8. ["California and the Exposition," 1915 \(PDF\)](#)
9. ["A Thousand Mile Motor Trip thru Western Nebraska," 1916 \(PDF\)](#)
10. ["Yellowstone National Park and Colorado," 1917 \(PDF\)](#)
11. ["Kansas City and Kansas \(a short business trip\)," 1917 \(PDF\)](#)
12. ["A Motor Trip thru Colorado," 1918 \(PDF\)](#)
13. ["Glacier National Park," 1919 \(PDF\)](#)
14. ["Washington and Northern Idaho," 1919 \(PDF\)](#)
15. ["A 7,000 Mile Motor Trip West. Crater and Rainier," 1921 \(PDF\)](#)
16. ["A 6,000 Mile Motor Trip thru Eastern States," 1922 \(PDF\)](#)
17. ["The Black Hills and Estes Park. Rocky Mountain National Park," 1923 \(PDF\)](#)
18. ["Texas and the Gulf. Hot Springs and Platt National Park," 1923 \(PDF\)](#)
19. ["To Minnesota Lake Region and Sully Hill National Park and Wisconsin," 1924 \(PDF\)](#)
20. ["A Second Trip to Minnesota Lake Region. Lake Vermillion," 1925 \(PDF\)](#)
21. ["Colorado: Mesa Verde National Park," 1925 \(PDF\)](#)
22. ["A Third Motor Trip to Minnesota Lake Region," 1926 \(PDF\)](#)
23. ["Excursion to Chicago," 1927 \(PDF\)](#)
24. ["A Little Trip to the Ozarks," 1928 \(PDF\)](#)
25. ["California National Parks. Zion and Bryce. Big Trees. Yosemite. Mt. Lassen. Zion. Bryce," 1929 \(PDF\)](#)
26. ["To St. Louis, Missouri. Humane \[Society\] Convention," 1929 \(PDF\)](#)
27. ["Spokane: the Anniversary Trip," 1930 \(PDF\)](#)
28. ["'"Bungie-Weck,' the House Car, takes a Maiden Trip \[in Nebraska\]," 1931 \(PDF\)](#)
29. ["To Colorado . . . again. We Stay in 'Rose-Den'," 1934 \(PDF\)](#)
30. ["To Chicago: 'The Century of Progress'," 1934 \(PDF\)](#)
31. ["The House-Car goes to Minnesota," 1936 \(PDF\)](#)
32. ["The House-Car goes to Minnesota -- to the Canadian Boundary," 1937 \(PDF\)](#)
33. ["To the Humane \[Society\] Convention at Milwaukee, Wisconsin," 1937 \(PDF\)](#)
34. ["To New York City with the Cathedral Choir," 1939 \(PDF\)](#)
35. ["To Estes Park -- Margaret Weber and I in 'Rose-Den'," 1948 \(PDF\)](#)
36. ["To Washington by Plane -- to Spokane and the Family," 1950 \(PDF\)](#)
37. ["To California by Plane," 1951 \(PDF\)](#)

38. ["To Pittsburg, Kansas \[two trips\]," 1951, 1953 \(PDF\)](#)

Series 2 - Poetry

39. Poetry
40. Compiled poetry [photocopies], 20 p. 2 copies

Series 3 - Prose

41. Prose

Series 4 - Quotation journals

42. "Therein: many wise sayings and some others not so wise which I have enjoyed"
43. "Therein: More Wisdom"

Series 5 - Correspondence

44. Correspondence, 1964-1965

Series 6 - Miscellany

45. Miscellany

PJE/pje	02-1990
KFK/kfk	11-24-1997
Revised TMM	12-07-2006

Subject headings:

Automobile travel
California -- Description and travel
Colorado -- Description and travel
Gehrke, Edward Arthur, 1880-1939
Gehrke, Margaret May Patton, 1883-1978
Glacier National Park (Mont.)
Kansas -- Description and travel
Minnesota -- Description and travel
Nebraska -- Description and travel
Poetry
Travelers -- Nebraska
Washington -- Description and travel
Wisconsin -- Description and travel
Women poets -- Nebraska -- Lincoln
Wyoming -- Description and travel
Yellowstone National Park (Wyo.)