

Helen Tank '32 Diary Transcriptions 1928-1932 (modified 1986-1989)

2014.002

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| Quantity: | 13 file folders |
| Access: | Open to Research |
| Acquisition: | Gift, Helen Elizabeth Tank, circa June 1989 |
| Processed by: | Revised by Abigail Stambach, April 2014. See Administrative Note. |

Administrative Note:

Ms. Tank '32 donated the transcription of her college diary to Sage Archives and Special Collections circa June 1989. It is unknown when the collection was initially processed but it was reprocessed in April 2014. The location of the original diary is unknown.

Biographic Note:

Helen Elizabeth "Betty" Tank graduated from Russell Sage College in 1932. While a student at RSC, she majored in Secretarial studies. Betty was also a member of several clubs including Forum, Press Board and the basketball team. She wrote for the student newspaper, *the Quill* and served as the Editor-in-Chief during her senior year. Betty was also an avid hiker and outdoorswoman. She was a member of the Outing Club for three years and as a senior, she served as the Hiking Leader.

Betty graduated during the early years of the Great Depression, so she worked odd jobs before finding work as a secretary for a social worker in Philadelphia in 1933. While she enjoyed the city of Philadelphia, she accepted a secretary at large position at Connecticut State College in Storrs, Connecticut shortly after in September 1934. Betty worked at the college for three years before leaving for work as a chauffeur-kennel girl at Airlie Farm in New Bedford, New York. While the job did not pay much, she was able to save enough money to finance a trip to London in August 1939. Betty lived in England, Turkey, and Cairo during World War II and worked a variety of jobs including a position with the American Red Cross in Cairo. She returned to the United States in 1944 due to ill health. She detailed her war experiences in her memoir, *Pushing my Shadow*, published in 1995.

Upon returning home, Betty worked as a teacher in rural areas of the country for several years before returning to school. In 1951, she began studying and working at Columbia University's Teacher College in New York City. She earned her Master's degree in 1954. Afterwards, she taught in the Albany Public School District before accepting a position as a second grade teacher at the Coxsackie School District in 1960. Betty retired from teaching in 1971. Afterwards, she traveled and worked on her memoirs. Betty died on April 16, 2007.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection contains the transcriptions of Helen Elizabeth “Betty” Tank’s college diary. In her diary, Betty discusses her college experience from 1928 to 1932, the year she graduated. Specially, she writes about her summer employment as a waitress, roommates, events she attended such as concerts, her coursework, the city of Troy, NY, the Quill, and her religious beliefs. It is also evident in the diary that Betty enjoyed the outdoors as she describes her outdoor activities like hikes and walks in great detail. Betty wrote sporadically and there are gaps in her entries. The entries also vary in length. Some are quite short while others are longer in length. The diary is organized by academic year with the summer entries separated out. Some years are longer and have multiple parts. These are noted in the folder listing.

It is believed Betty transcribed the diary between 1986 and 1989. Throughout the diary, Betty added addendums to her entries in which she described the entry’s events in greater depth. She also added an addendum to the end in 1989 and it discusses her life after Russell Sage College. There are also pencil notations throughout the transcription and it is believed Betty made these notations.

The collection also contains three pieces correspondence between Betty and then College Archivist, Helen Upton from 1988. In the correspondence, they discuss adding a copy of the transcription to the College Archives.

Folder Listing:

| Folder Number | Folder Contents |
|---------------|--|
| 1 | Correspondence, January 11, 1988-February 23, 1988 |
| 2 | Freshmen Year, 1928-1929 |
| 3 | Sophomore Year, 1929-1930 Part I |
| 4 | Sophomore Year, 1929-1930 Part II |
| 5 | Summer 1930 |
| 6 | Addendum to Summer 1930 |
| 7 | Junior Year 1930-1931 Part I |
| 8 | Junior Year 1930-1931 Part II |
| 9 | Junior Year 1930-1931 Part III |
| 10 | Junior Year 1930-1931 Part IV |
| 11 | Summer 1931 |
| 12 | Senior Year 1931-1932 |
| 13 | Addendum to Tank Diaries June 28, 1989 |