Biography

According to the letter dated December 29, 1996, from Elisabeth Blossom Boyd's grand-daughter, Susan Davis, which accompanied the donation of the diary, Elisabeth and her sister, Litta (Zolitta), of Green Bay, Wisconsin, attended Northwestern University for one year. Although neither the letter nor the diary provides much biographical material about Elisabeth's family, the diary vividly describes her daily life during her stay at Northwestern.

Elisabeth came to Northwestern to study music, attending sight-reading classes and violin lessons. She also took an enjoyable cooking course at the School of Domestic Science and Art in Chicago, and a "simply fascinating" china-painting class somewhere in Evanston. From the tone of Elisabeth's diary, it seems that she and her sister very much enjoyed their year in the Willard Hall dormitory at Northwestern. Most of the entries refer to their extra-curricular activities: "spreads" and parties in the dormitories, visits to relatives in Chicago, shopping, walks, basketball, and attendance at theatrical and musical productions, as well as choral club and orchestra rehearsals. Elisabeth and her friends spent a good deal of time in Chicago, taking el's, trolleys, and trains as they traveled from Jackson Park to State Street to Sheridan Park to Evanston. Although they elected not to join a sorority, the sisters were active in a number of organizations. In one day (October 13, 1903), Elisabeth joined a Bible Class, the Y.W.C.A., and the Evanston Musical Club. On Sundays, she tried different churches, from the Methodists to the Christian Scientists, sometimes attending two sermons and Sunday school.

Susan Davis noted in her letter that her mother, Adelaide Boyd Davis, also attended Northwestern for a year (her studies were interrupted by a family tragedy) and that, indeed, the donation of the diary was made to commemorate Davis' own daughter's application for admission to Northwestern.

Description

The diary is a 7-1/4" x 4-1/2" notebook containing one hundred lined pages. The cover has the hand-written title "JOURNAL, VOL I, Willard Hall, Evanston, Ill." The diary starts with Elisabeth and Litta's departure for Chicago on September 17, 1903 and ends on April 26, 1904; the last entry is followed by the notation "Continued in Volume II."

Elisabeth was conscientious about writing in her dairy, omitting entries only between September 22-26, 1903, and during the three weeks of Christmas vacation, December 1903-January 8, 1904. Her handwriting is fine and legible, with very little crossing out.

Provenance: The diary was donated to the University Archives by the diarist's grand-daughter, Susan Davis, as Accession #97-6, January 8, 1997.

Restrictions: None


Note: This diary is filed in the University Archives biographical files (Room 110) under Elisabeth Blossom Boyd.