Biography

Edith Alice Sternfeld was born September 26, 1898, in Chicago, Illinois, the daughter of Samuel Sternfeld and Alice Ellen Brady Sternfeld. Sternfeld attended Nicholas Senn High School, on Chicago's north side, from 1913-1917, graduating in 1917. At the time of Sternfeld’s registration to Northwestern University, in September 1917, her guardian was Miss Emma A. Brady, her mother’s sister, since both of her parents were deceased. Her church affiliation was Episcopal.

While at Northwestern University, Sternfeld was an active member of the Young Women’s Christian Association, Chi Omega, a women’s social sorority, the women’s honorary sororities of Phi Beta Kappa and Shi-Ai, the women’s Inter-Sorority of Sigma Sigma, and the Laurean Literary Society, as well as various art groups. She graduated from the Northwestern University College of Arts and Sciences with a Bachelor of Arts, Cum Laude, in June 1921.

For one year following graduation from Northwestern, Sternfeld did office work, then was accepted to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1923, receiving a Bachelor of Art Education (BAE) in 1925. From 1925-1930 Sternfeld taught at the Layton School of Art in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1930 she accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the Design and Painting Department at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa. From 1939 through 1941 Sternfeld attended the University of Iowa, in the summers, earning her Master of Art (MA) in 1941. Sternfeld traveled extensively throughout the world during sabbaticals and with International Study Tours. She exhibited her art nationally, winning several awards, and was active in professional arts organizations, such as the American Water Color Society, Baltimore Water Color Club, Washington Water Color Club (Corcoran Gallery of Art), and the California Water Color Society (Los Angeles Museum). At the time of her retirement from Grinnell in 1967, she was the Chairman of the Department of Art. After her retirement, she moved to Santa Barbara, California. Edith Sternfeld died on September 5, 1990.

Additional biographical information about Edith Sternfeld can be found in the Northwestern University Alumni Biographical Files (University Archives); she is also listed in Who’s Who in American Art, Who’s Who in the Midwest, Who’s Who in American Education, Who’s Who of American Women, and the Directory of American Scholars.

Description of the Scrapbook

The materials in the Edith Sternfeld scrapbook date between 1917 and 1921 and document Sternfeld's social and academic life at Northwestern University.

The scrapbook has a purple cloth cover with a Silver “N” inscribed on the front, and the pages are laced in with a white leather thong. The book, identified on the first page as Memory and Fellowship Book, was published by the College Memory Book Company, Chicago, IL.

In addition to blank pages for photographs and ephemera, the scrapbook contains a number of pre-printed pages on which the owner and her friends could record specific information. All of
these sections were filled in by Sternfeld, providing much additional detail about her friends and her activities. These pages include **Date, Name, Home Address, Birthday/ Anniversary, and Happy Thoughts** (including information much like that found in an autograph book); **Comparative Athletic Record** (here, Sternfeld listed the 1918-1919 Northwestern football team); **School and Social Functions** (including a notation of the Woman’s League Welcome Party of October 4, 1918 and President’s Reception of June 17, 1919); **Clubs and Societies** (Sternfeld became a member of the Lauren Literary Society in March 1918 and member of Sigma Sigma, February 19, 1919); **Memorable Trips; My Favorites** (listing favorite Classes, Books, Friends, etc. for the years 1917-1918 and 1918-1919); **Professors I Have Met** (listing some of Sternfeld’s professors, the courses she took, including the marks she received, and Hobbies and Favorite Stories of the person listed); and **Dates and Doings** (including events between September 30, 1918 through June 24, 1919).

After the information sections begins the “body” of the scrapbook which contains memorabilia, well-captioned photographs, drawings, doodles directly on the scrapbook pages, programs from events (musical, theatrical, and academic), ticket stubs, dance cards, newspaper clippings relating to campus happenings and friends' activities, invitations, and notes from friends. Of note are the many lapel pins included in the book, which document Sternfeld's involvement in many organizations, most of them relating to World War I (such as the United War Work Campaign, the Red Cross, Fatherless Children of France). Sternfeld was especially active in the YWCA. The main body of the book concludes with a copy of Miss Sternfeld’s Senior Class book of 1921.

Inserted in the back of the scrapbook are what appear to be pages of photographs from another scrapbook (but covering the same date span). These pages are black as opposed the gray pages of the book bound with leather. As in the main scrapbook, the inserted pages contain photographs, programs, and other ephemera, that are well captioned. Dating from April 1921-August 1921, these pages focus more specifically on activities of her senior year and graduation.

**Provenance:** This scrapbook was donated to the University Archives by Kathleen D. Javaheri, great niece of Edith Alice Sternfeld, on September 23, 1999, as Accession #99-170.

**Restrictions:** None.

**Processor:** Vanessa L. Smith; December 1999