

Midget Family Papers, approximately 1890-1964

MSC 0937

Identification Number: MSC 0937

Provenance and Acquisition: The Midget Family Papers were donated by Carole S. Midgette.

Processing Information: Zachary Keith processed Midget Family Collection.

Physical Description/Extent: 2 full-size document boxes, 1 half-size document box, 1 artifact box

Creator: Midget, Harvey Gordon, 1888-1976; Midget, George Thomas, 1911-1977; Midget, Lucy Suddarth, 1888-1978; Midget Family

Dates: approximately 1890-1964, bulk approximately 1900-1942

Language: English

Scope & Contents: The Midget Family Papers consists of receipts, correspondence, photographs, publications, pamphlets, business cards, calling cards, ration books

George T. Midget's 1931 vehicle registration for his 1928 Harley Davidson motorcycle. Midget family ration books from World War II reveal information about the Home Front during the war. Among the financial records are receipts for groceries purchased by George Midget while stationed at Fort Peck, Montana; a 1931 series of handwritten receipts for the purchase of a Harley Davidson motorcycle, as well as a receipt for motorcycle parts; receipts for wholesale leather used at the Midget Shoe Shop. Correspondence is primarily to and from H. Gordon, George, Lucy, and Gordon M. to other family members, generally of a personal nature.

Among the numerous business cards is one advertising the Midget Shoe Shop and Shine Parlor, ran by Gordon and Lucy, the back side of which depicts the American Sign Language alphabet. Also included is the deed for the Midget Shoe Shop at 12 ½ Gay Street, later located at 109 Gay Street. 35mm negatives reproduce maps of Fort Morris and Liberty County, Georgia, as well as a strip of photographs of camping in the woods. The sole artifact is one of Lucy Suddarth Midget's baby shoes.

Both Lucy and Gordon's journals from 1901-1906 reveal goings-on at the Tennessee School for the Deaf as well as personal feelings toward events and people they encountered. Some of Gordon's school assignments survived and are comprise the school records folder. The photographs are primarily portraits and group photographs of Midget family members including Gordon and Lucy, however many are unidentified. Among the rest are a photograph of the 1907 Tennessee School for the Deaf girls' basketball team, the 1904 Tennessee School for the Deaf football team, and the school's baseball team. David T. Suddarth, Lucy's brother, is pictured in his World War I uniform. He served in Co. B, 114th machine gun battalion, 30th Division.

Administrative/Biographical History: Harvey Gordon Midget was born on September 9, 1888, in Jennings, Tennessee, to George William Midget and Drucilla Smartt Midget. He began attending the Tennessee School for the Deaf around 1896 and graduated in 1905. He played both left end and halfback on the school's football team that won the city championship in 1904, even beating Maryville College in a scrimmage on November 19. He also played right field on the baseball team. At school, Gordon met Lucy Suddarth, a classmate, and the pair married on December 23, 1908.

Lucy was born on September 28, 1888, in Sumner County to Davis T. Suddarth and Nannie Majors Suddarth. Lucy attended the school from 1897 until at least 1907, where she participated on the girls' basketball team. After getting married, the couple moved to Nashville, where Gordon built ranges for Phillips, Buttorff and Co. They moved back to Knoxville in 1910, and Gordon began teaching shoemaking at his alma mater. In 1918, Gordon and Lucy opened the Midget Shoe Shop at 109 Gay Street.

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On Labor Day, 1934, Gordon was seriously injured when he was struck by a car at Inskip Racetrack. He remained hospitalized for nearly a month, receiving three blood transfusions. On Monday, January 19, 1942, a paste board sign fell against the stove at the Midget Shoe Shop on 109 Gay Street and ignited. The fire, and subsequent water, damaged the floor, walls, wiring, and skylight. Luckily the store was insured and ultimately repaired and reopened. Throughout his adult life, Gordon was an active member in the National Association of the Deaf and served as vice president of the Tennessee Association of the Deaf treasurer of the Tennessee Deaf Mute Society. He died on December 26, 1976, and is buried in Manchester City Cemetery, Manchester, Tennessee. Lucy died on August 12, 1978, and is buried alongside her husband.

George Thomas Midget was born on May 8, 1911, to Harvey Gordon Midget and Lucy Suddarth Midget. He attended Knoxville High School where he participated in drama. He married Aretta Carr Bundren on December 20, 1928. The pair had at least one child, Aretta Nova Midget. George worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, stationed at places such as Fort Peck, Montana, and the Panama Canal Zone. He and Aretta divorced sometime between 1935 and 1940. He then married Evelyn Moody Midget, and the pair had one child, Gordon Moody Midgette. George and Evelyn divorced in 1953. He subsequently married Marjorie Midget and they remained together until their divorce in 1970. George died on December 28, 1977, and is buried with his parents in Manchester, Tennessee.

Index Terms:

Personal Names:

Midget, George Thomas, 1911-1977

Midget, Harvey Gordon, 1888-1976

Midget, Lucy Suddarth, 1888-1978

Midgette, Gordon Moody, 1943-2014

Corporate Names:

Midget Shoe Shop

National Association of the Deaf

Tennessee Association of the Deaf

Tennessee School for the Deaf

Subjects:

Deaf athletes – Tennessee

Deaf — Education -- Tennessee

Deafness in children – Education -- United States

Disabilities -- Tennessee -- History

Entrepreneurship – Tennessee -- Knoxville

Gay Street (Knoxville, Tenn.) – Businesses, Small

Geographic Names:

Knoxville (Tenn.) -- Buildings, structures, etc.

Knoxville (Tenn.) – History -- 20th century

Knoxville (Tenn.) – History -- Pictorial works – 20th century

Document Types:

Business cards

Christmas cards

Clippings (information artifacts)

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Correspondence
Negatives (photographs)
Notebooks
Photographs
Postage stamps
Programs (documents)
Ration books
Receipts (financial records)
Tintypes
Visiting cards

Organization/Arrangement of Materials: Collection is organized alphabetically by document type.

Container List

BOX 1

Folder 1 – Affidavits
Folder 2 – Applications – U. S. Food Administration
Folder 3 – Bills of Lading
Folder 4 – Birth Certificates – Gordon Moody Midget
Folder 5 – Blank checks
Folder 6 – Business cards
Folder 7 – Calling cards
Folder 8 – Correspondence – Arretta Midget
Folder 9 – Correspondence – George T. Midgett
Folder 10 – Correspondence – Gordon M. Midgette
Folder 11 – Correspondence – H. Gordon Midget
Folder 12 – Correspondence – Lizzie Suddarth
Folder 13 – Correspondence – Lucy Suddarth Midget
Folder 14 – Correspondence -- Other
Folder 15 – Dance cards
Folder 16 -- Deeds
Folder 17 – Envelopes – Brooklyn Photo Copying Co.
Folder 18 – Ephemera – Panama Canal
Folder 19 -- Fabric
Folder 20 – Forms – Vehicle Safety Inspection
Folder 21 – Insurance – Midget Shoe Shop
Folder 21 – Invitations

BOX 2

Folder 22 – Journals – H. Gordon Midget
Folder 23 – Journals – Lucy Suddarth Midget
Folder 24 – Lists
Folder 25 – Negatives
Folder 26 – Newspaper clippings
Folder 27 – Notices – War Department Classification – H. Gordon Midget
Folder 28 – Pamphlets – “Wonderful Cave of Winds, Manitou, Colorado”
Folder 29 – Photographs
Folder 30 – Photographs

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Folder 31 – Photographs

BOX 3

Folder 32 – Programs – National Association of the Deaf banquet

Folder 33 – Publications – “Man the Life Boat”

Folder 34 – Publications – “Recreation” – U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

Folder 35 – Ration books

Folder 36 – Receipts

Folder 37 – Recipes – “Ten Tempting Heinz “Kitchen Quickies””

Folder 38 – Registrations – Motorcycle

Folder 39 – School records – H. Gordon Midget

Folder 40 – Taxes – Midget Shoe Shop

Folder 41 – Tintypes

BOX 4

Baby shoe – Lucy Suddarth Midget

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