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Descriptive Inventory

MSS 561 HINES, Clara Ursula (Wright) Nahm, 1904-1983

6½ boxes. 34 folders. 207 items. 1936-1984. Originals, photocopies, photograph.

2004.175.5

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Clara Ursula Wright, the daughter of Arkley Wright and Annie (Mattick) Wright, was born in Port Royal, Henry County, Kentucky on 26 July 1904. After her mother died in 1907 and her father remarried, Clara was raised by an aunt and uncle in Prestonville, Kentucky. She graduated from Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Kentucky in 1923, taught school in Carroll and Harlan counties, and in 1929 moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky. After a few years working in administration at Western Kentucky State Teachers College (now WKU) she became secretary to Clarence R. Nahm, who owned an insurance agency with his brother. Clara and Clarence married in 1933.

The Nahms became friends with Bowling Green native Duncan Hines and his second wife, Emelie Tolman. (Hines's first wife, Florence Chaffin, had died in 1938.) After Clarence Nahm died in 1944 and Hines and Emelie divorced in 1945, Clara and Duncan Hines married on 22 March 1946.

By the time of his marriage to Clara, Duncan Hines had achieved success as the author of restaurant and lodging guidebooks, including *Adventures in Good Eating*, *Lodging for a Night*, and *Adventures in Good Cooking*. Clara became Hines's helpmate and traveling companion, accompanying him across the country on business, pleasure and promotional tours and overseeing their home-office headquarters on Old Louisville Road in Bowling Green. In 1949, Hines joined with marketing executive Roy H. Park to form Hines-Park Foods, Inc. The company introduced ice cream, cake mixes and other foods under the Duncan Hines brand, making Hines a household name. In 1956, Hines-Park Foods merged with Procter & Gamble, and the Duncan Hines brand expanded to include mixes for other baked goods such as cookies, brownies and muffins. Hines's partner Roy Park became a Procter & Gamble vice president and continued to operate Hines-Park Foods.

Hines, a heavy smoker, died of lung cancer on 15 March 1959. After his death, Clara sold their home on Old Louisville Road and moved to a house nearer to Bowling Green. She continued to travel, both in the United States and around the world. She was a member of the Bowling Green Country Club, the XX Club (a women's literary club), and St. Margaret's Guild of the Episcopal Church. Clara Hines died on 8 August 1983 in Bowling Green and was interred in Fairview Cemetery.

COLLECTION NOTE

This collection consists mostly of the personal diaries of Clara (Wright) Hines for the years 1946 through 1979. Also included is some correspondence, appointment calendars, travel itineraries and recipes. An inventory is in Box 1, Folder 1.

Clara's diaries for 1946 through early 1959 (Boxes 1-3) record in considerable detail her life with Duncan Hines, both at home in Bowling Green, Kentucky and during their extensive travels, by car, train and sometimes by plane, through the United States. They make regular trips to Chicago (Hines's former home), to New York City and to Ithaca, New York (home of the Duncan Hines Institute, publisher of his guidebooks). They also journey to numerous other cities all over the country and in Canada, and tour Europe in 1954. The diary entries mostly concern Clara's activities—cooking, housekeeping, shopping, leisure, socializing, errands and appointments—and her work in compiling and indexing Hines's cookbooks, testing recipes, helping his secretaries manage his mail, and working on updated editions of his guidebooks. She gives descriptions of their many U.S. destinations primarily as a backdrop to her activities, but her observations of international destinations are more extensive. Duncan Hines receives constant mention, but while Clara records his personal routine and incidents such as illnesses, she provides little insight into his business beyond noting meetings, interviews, personal appearances, radio and television broadcasts, book signings and other publicity events. Some of the diaries include lists of individuals they meet during the year's travel.

As might be expected, during the couple's travels Clara keeps a faithful record of their meals and lodging. She notes the restaurants and hotels they visit, and rarely neglects to describe each day's meals and comment on their quality; she also regularly records their menus at home. Both at home and on the road, Clara makes constant reference to their large circle of friends, family and associates, including Roy Park of Hines-Park Foods and his wife Dorothy ("Dottie"), and Arthur and Nelle Palmer, proprietors of the Lowell Inn in Stillwater, Minnesota. Included with some of her diaries are clippings, menus, cocktail napkins, and postcards relating to their dining and hotel destinations. The diaries portray the busy and affectionate partnership of two people combining their unique occupation with the "good life" of the post-World War II years. Incidents of interest include:

- their frequent trips to Chicago, beginning immediately after their marriage, where Clara regularly visits Marshall Field's department store and they attend the Duncan Hines Family Dinner, an annual gathering of restaurateurs and hotel keepers listed in Hines's guidebooks;
- Hines's personal habits, including his regular afternoon nap and his fondness for watching wrestling and prize fights on television;
- Clara's three flights from Bowling Green to Louisville in August 1948, the month in which Eastern Airlines introduced regular passenger service to the city;
- their especially hectic travel during the years between the launch of Hines-Park Foods in 1949 and its merger with Procter & Gamble in 1956;
- in summer and fall 1952, their defense of a civil suit by office manager Donald H. Molesworth, who was awarded damages after Hines dismissed him only a few months into his three-year contract; and
- Hines's increasing health problems, which keep them at home from September 1958 until his death on 15 March 1959 when, Clara writes, "the light of my life went out. And so I start a new phase of existence."

Clara's diaries from 1959 to 1979 (Boxes 3-6) record her life after the death of Duncan Hines. Although she is left financially secure, the settlement of Hines's estate and subsequent income tax matters require her attention every year. She continues to travel to Chicago and Minnesota, to Ithaca and New York City (where she sees Roy and Dottie Park), and to visit her half-brothers and their families in Warsaw, Kentucky and in California. She also travels with friends and in tour groups to dozens of countries around the world. During a 1967 tour of Africa booked through the travel agency Travcoa, she meets a young tour guide named Anthony "Tony" James. They develop a curious friendship that lasts several years and even creates a rivalry with another world traveler, Katharine Lynd of West Palm Beach, Florida.

When at home in Bowling Green, Clara notes her routine activities—appointments, meals, television watching and reading—as well as her social activities, which include literary, church and dinner clubs, playing bridge and shopping. She frequently mentions her longtime housekeeper, Myrtle Potter, Bowling Green friends such as Louise Drake, Louise "Lou" Toomey and Lois Lanier, her half-brothers John, Jack and Bob Wright, Duncan Hines's nieces Jane (Hines) Morningstar and Louise (Hines) Moss and their families, and Hines's great-nephew John P. Hines and his wife Harriet. Clara's life without Duncan Hines, however, is lonelier and less active, and her diary entries often begin with "a nothing of a day" or similar phrasing. Both Hines and Clara enjoyed their cocktails as well as their food, but after his death her diaries regularly include confessions of excessive drinking. She chastises herself as she records her alcohol abuse, hangovers, her inability to stay sober, and the effect of her drinking on her friendships and social obligations. Increasingly desperate after years of such behavior, in the fall of 1973 she twice checks into Nashville, Tennessee hospitals seeking treatment for alcoholism. She enters hospital again in spring and summer 1974, summer 1975 and spring 1977, spends a week at a treatment center in California in fall 1976, and attempts to participate in Alcoholics Anonymous; nevertheless, she is unable to stop her alcohol use. Clara's diaries end in 1979, 3½ years before her death. Although shadowed by her alcoholism, they provide a full picture of the daily life of a woman of her time and means.

Also included in this collection are a few appointment calendars (Box 6, Folder 4); itineraries issued by travel agencies for some of Clara's international trips (Box 7, Folder 1); incoming letters (Box 7, Folder 2) from family and friends relating mainly to recipes for *Adventures in Good Cooking* and to personal matters, including a 1982 letter written to Clara by her half-brother Jack's daughter after his death; correspondence (Box 7, Folder 3) relating to content for *Adventures in Good Eating and Lodging for a Night*, and to a 1984 article about Hines in *Smithsonian Magazine*; letters and a postcard written by Clara during her 1963 travel to Europe (Box 7, Folder 4); recipes, probably considered for inclusion in *Adventures in Good Cooking* (Box 7, Folder 5); and miscellaneous papers (Box 7, Folder 6), including an equator crossing ceremony program, a photograph of Clara and her travel group at the Taj Mahal in India, and a radio script for a cooking program. Items relating to Clara's estate (Box 7, Folder 7) consist of a copy of her will, the auction catalog liquidating her estate, which included a large collection of fine porcelain, and associated articles about the sale.

SHELF LIST

BOX 1	Clara (Wright) Nahm Hines – Diaries	1946-1950	62 items
Folder 1	Inventory		1 item
Folder 2	Diary and loose items therein	1946	14 items
Folder 3	Diary and loose items therein	1947	38 items
Folder 4	Diary and loose items therein	1948	4 items
Folder 5	Diary and loose items therein	1949	2 items
Folder 6	Diary and loose items therein	1950	3 items
BOX 2	Clara (Wright) Nahm Hines – Diaries	1951-1955	29 items
Folder 1	Diary and loose items therein	1951	5 items
Folder 2	Diary and loose items therein	1952	4 items
Folder 3	Diary and loose items therein	1953	10 items
Folder 4	Diary	1954	2 items
Folder 5	Diary and loose items therein	1955	8 items
BOX 3	Clara (Wright) Nahm Hines – Diaries	1956-1963	10 items
Folder 1	Diaries and loose item therein	1956, 1957	3 items
Folder 2	Diaries	1958-1959, 1960	2 items
Folder 3	Diary and loose items therein	1961	2 items
Folder 4	Diary and loose items therein	1962	2 items
Folder 5	Diary and loose items therein	1963	2 items

BOX 4	Clara (Wright) Nahm Hines – Diaries	1964-1970	12 items
Folder 1	Diaries	1964, 1965	2 items
Folder 2	Diaries and loose items therein	1966, 1967	4 items
Folder 3	Diaries	1968, 1969	2 items
Folder 4	Diary and loose items therein	1970	4 items
BOX 5	Clara (Wright) Nahm Hines – Diaries	1971-1976	6 items
Folder 1	Diaries	1971, 1972	2 items
Folder 2	Diaries	1973, 1974	2 items
Folder 3	Diaries	1975, 1976	2 items
BOX 6	Clara (Wright) Nahm Hines – Diaries; Appointment calendars	1961-1979	11 items
Folder 1	Diary	1977	1 item
Folder 2	Diary and loose items therein	1978	2 items
Folder 3	Diary and loose items therein	1979	5 items
Folder 4	Appointment calendars	1961-1962, 1964	3 items
BOX 7	Clara (Wright) Nahm Hines – Miscellaneous	1936-1984	77 items
Folder 1	Itineraries for international travel	1966-1972	12 items
Folder 2	Incoming letters to Clara Hines	1949-1983	22 items
Folder 3	Correspondence related to Duncan Hines publications	1955-1984	12 items
Folder 4	Clara Hines – Letters and postcards of	1963	3 items
Folder 5	Clara Hines – Recipes	1936-1957	14 items

Folder 6	Clara Hines – Miscellaneous	1937-1972	6 items
Folder 7	Clara Hines – Will; Estate auction catalog and associated items	1970-1984	8 items

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD

MSS HINES, Clara Ursula (Wright) Nahm, 1936-1984
561 1904-1983

Personal diaries of Clara (Wright) Hines, Bowling Green, Kentucky, kept during her marriage to food critic Duncan Hines and after his death. Includes some correspondence, travel itineraries, and miscellaneous papers.

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