7-1-2011

Davis, Anne Pence, 1901-1982 (MSS 373)

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Anne Elizabeth Pence, daughter of Dr. William H. Pence (b. 1854) and Nettie Pence (1870-1961), was born on 25 July 1901 in Guthrie, Kentucky. Anne grew up in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where she graduated from Bowling Green High School in 1916. She received a bachelor’s degree in education from the Western Kentucky State Normal School and Teachers College (now Western Kentucky University) in 1925. On 24 December 1925, Anne married Richard Earl “Dick” Davis (1903-1957), a native of Sturgis, Kentucky. In June 1926, they moved to Wichita Falls, Texas, where Dick worked as a buyer for the Perkins-Timberlake chain of stores.

Anne Pence Davis became involved in civic and literary activities in Wichita Falls. She joined the Manuscript Club, a local group of professional writers. She published poetry and reviews, worked in radio, and in 1927 accepted a position at the Wichita Daily Times, where she wrote advertising copy and a column called “Come A-Shopping With Mary Ann.” She also became involved with the Camp Fire Girls, completing the Guardian training course, achieving the rank of Torch Bearer, and eventually serving on the national board.

Through her work creating programs for the Camp Fire Girls, Davis developed an interest in writing juvenile fiction. In 1935, Chicago’s Goldsmith Publishing Company accepted her manuscript for what became Mimi at Camp as part of its “Tomboy Series,” and contracted with Davis for a second book, Mimi at Sheridan School. The third book in the series, Mimi’s House Party, was published in 1936. The Mimi books, which featured the adventures of extroverted Mimi Hammond and her friends, were popular with young audiences, especially girls in Kentucky, as Mimi’s House Party was set in Bowling Green and Mimi at Camp featured a visit to Mammoth Cave. The books were also appealing for their portrayal of a “real” girl. Writing to Davis (Box 1, Folder 6) in 1976, a woman who had read the books as a child contrasted Mimi with more Pollyanna-like characters who “never had to go to school, never were reprimanded by their mothers, [and] never did anything ‘dumb.’”

In 1938, Davis published Wishes Are Horses, another story for adolescent girls. The book was adopted by the Texas State Board of Education for its Junior High School free reading list and sold 40,000 copies in its first year. The Dallas Camp Fire Girls also adapted the book.
for a series of radio broadcasts. In 1940, Davis published a novel, *The Customer is Always Right*. Set in a fictional Texas department store, it became an alternate Book of the Month Club selection. In 1960, Davis returned to juvenile fiction with *The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch*, which received Writers Roundup honors from the Austin, Texas chapter of Theta Sigma Phi, the national fraternity for women in journalism.

Throughout her career, Davis published many book reviews, poems and haiku, and her success in fiction put her in demand as a speaker. She also published articles on the technique of writing and reviewing, and participated in writers’ conferences, workshops, arts festivals and summer college courses. In 1937, she was elected to the Texas Institute of Letters.

Anne Pence Davis died on 18 May 1982 in Wichita Falls, Texas and was buried in Sturgis, Kentucky.

**COLLECTION NOTE**

This collection consists of correspondence, photographs, scrapbooks, publications and associated material relating to the literary career of Anne Pence Davis (1901-1982).

Box 1 contains Davis’s correspondence from 1929-1976. Box 1, Folder 2 contains personal and professional correspondence relating to her poetry and juvenile fiction writing, specifically her *Mimi* books and *Wishes Are Horses*. Included are letters from Goldsmith Publishing Company detailing its terms of acceptance for *Mimi at Camp* (originally titled *Hullie Finds the Trail*) and proposing a followup, *Mimi at Sheridan School*. Of interest are two letters from Goldsmith in 1934 and 1936 describing what the firm found acceptable and unacceptable in juvenile fiction submissions. Also included are fan letters from young readers of the *Mimi* books and other congratulatory letters from friends, organizations such as the Camp Fire Girls, and former schoolmates.

Box 1, Folders 3 and 4 contain primarily personal and professional correspondence relating to *The Customer is Always Right*, including letters of praise from friends and colleagues, invitations to speak and arrangements for appearances, interviews and book signings. Also included is a small amount of correspondence relating to the *Mimi* books, *Wishes are Horses*, and Davis’s articles in the trade magazine *The Writer*.

Box 1, Folder 5 contains correspondence relating to the *Mimi* books, *Wishes are Horses*, and well regarded articles Davis published in *The Writer* before and after World War II. Of interest is a request to Davis to speak on behalf of “Bundles for Britain,” an organization providing aid to Great Britain after the outbreak of war.

Box 1, Folder 6 contains primarily correspondence with editors (including those of many of the publications contained in Box 4) regarding submissions of articles and poetry. Included is correspondence with A. S. Burack, longtime editor of *The Writer*, arranging for articles and discussing article ideas. Of interest is a 1960 letter from Jesse Stuart, then on the faculty of the American University at Cairo, thanking Davis for a review of his book *God’s Oddling*, and correspondence with two editors about Davis’s anti-Vietnam War poem “Peace Parley.” Also included are 1973 and 1975 letters from Davis regarding donation of her papers to the Kentucky Library & Museum and summarizing her current activities.

Box 1, Folder 7 contains undated correspondence, mostly from poetry magazine editors and fans of Davis’s books and poems. Of interest is a letter from novel and short story writer Norma Patterson, from whom Davis sought advice about writing serials.
Box 1, Folder 8 contains photographs, mostly of Davis at various stages of her career. Also included is a photograph of her husband in military uniform.

Box 2 contains mostly scrapbook material including publications, notices, reviews and other publicity. Box 2, Folder 1 contains clippings, reviews, notices and speeches relating to the Mimi books. Box 2, Folder 2 contains notices, clippings and reviews relating to Wishes Are Horses. Box 2, Folders 3 and 4 contain a book jacket and scrapbook pages with notices, reviews and clippings relating primarily to Wishes Are Horses. Box 2, Folders 5 and 6 contain notices, clippings and reviews relating to The Customer is Always Right, and Folder 5 includes a sample book cover. Box 2, Folder 7 contains clippings of poems published by Davis from 1928-1935. Box 2, Folder 8 contains manuscript pages, galley proofs and page proofs for The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch.

Box 3 contains miscellaneous writings of Davis, clippings and other printed matter. Box 3, Folder 1 contains clippings, primarily from Texas newspapers, relating to Davis’s writing, speaking and other literary activities. Box 3, Folder 2 contains book reviews by Davis. Box 3, Folder 3 contains notes, two radio scripts, and poems. Box 3, Folder 4 contains miscellaneous printed matter, including conference, book fair and Camp Fire Girls programs. Box 3, Folder 5 contains drafts of some of Davis’s articles for The Writer. Box 3, Folder 6 contains material relating to the 1961 Theta Sigma Phi Writers Roundup Award given to Davis for The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch. Box 3, Folder 7 contains a biographical paper written by a student at Baylor University and based on a 1966 interview with Davis.

Box 4 contains publications, mostly journals of poetry and haiku, in which Davis’s work appeared. Of interest (Folder 12) are three issues of Let’s Have a Chat, an English-language magazine of poetry and prose published in Japan.

Box 5 contains miscellaneous material: Davis’s award certificate from Theta Sigma Phi (Folder 1); a braille edition of The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch and accompanying notices (Folders 2 and 3); a leather-bound copy of The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch (Folder 4); and an audiotape of a 1971 radio interview with Davis (Folder 5).

**SHELF LIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 1</th>
<th>Davis, Anne Pence</th>
<th>1929-1973</th>
<th>449 items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Inventory &amp; biographical material</td>
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<td>9 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1929-1939</td>
<td>97 items</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>Jan.-Apr. 1940</td>
<td>68 items</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>May-Dec. 1940</td>
<td>68 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1941-1948</td>
<td>38 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1960-1976</td>
<td>100 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>56 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 8</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>1936-1973, n.d.</td>
<td>13 items</td>
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**BOX 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder 1</th>
<th>Clippings, notices, reviews, sketches relating to <em>Mimi</em> books</th>
<th>1935-1938</th>
<th>10 items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Notices, reviews, etc. of <em>Wishes Are Horses</em></td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>10 items</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td><em>Wishes Are Horses</em> book jacket</td>
<td>[1938]</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Scrapbook pages relating to <em>Wishes Are Horses</em> (19 pp.)</td>
<td>1938-1939</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Reviews, notices, etc. relating to <em>The Customer is Always Right</em></td>
<td>1940-1941</td>
<td>24 items</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Scrapbook pages with clippings, reviews, notices, etc. (53 pp.)</td>
<td>1940-1941</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>Clippings of poems from scrapbook</td>
<td>1928-1935</td>
<td>21 items</td>
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<td>Folder 8</td>
<td><em>The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch</em> – Manuscript pages, galley proofs and page proofs</td>
<td>[1940]</td>
<td>11 items</td>
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**BOX 3**

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<tr>
<th>Folder 1</th>
<th>Clippings</th>
<th>1929-1976</th>
<th>42 items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Book reviews by Anne Pence Davis</td>
<td>1930-1964</td>
<td>49 items</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Miscellaneous – radio scripts, notes, poems written to Anne Pence Davis</td>
<td>1931-1940, n.d.</td>
<td>9 items</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Miscellaneous programs and printed matter</td>
<td>1936-1941, n.d.</td>
<td>13 items</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>Articles by Anne Pence Davis on writing and reviewing</td>
<td>ca. 1940-1962</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
<td>Theta Sigma Phi Writers Roundup Award – program, clippings, etc.</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>8 items</td>
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<td>Folder</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Items</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>“Anne Pence Davis” – paper by Connie (Sanders) Jurecek</td>
<td>1966, 1973</td>
<td>2 items</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BOX 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Davis, Anne Pence – Publications</strong></td>
<td><strong>1966-1972</strong></td>
<td><strong>64 items</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td><em>Southwester; Southern Literary Messenger</em></td>
<td>1938, 1940</td>
<td>2 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td><em>The American Bard</em></td>
<td>1968-1969</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td><em>The Angels</em></td>
<td>1967-1968</td>
<td>4 items</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td><em>Bitterroot</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td><em>Driftwood</em></td>
<td>1967-1972</td>
<td>5 items</td>
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<td>Folder 6</td>
<td><em>Encore</em></td>
<td>1967-1972</td>
<td>6 items</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td><em>The Green World</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
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<td>Folder 8</td>
<td><em>Haiku Highlights</em></td>
<td>1966-1972</td>
<td>15 items</td>
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<td>Folder 9</td>
<td><em>Haiku West</em></td>
<td>1969-1971</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<td>Folder 10</td>
<td><em>Imprints Quarterly</em></td>
<td>1967-1970</td>
<td>6 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 11</td>
<td><em>Jean’s Journal</em></td>
<td>1967-1970</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 12</td>
<td><em>Let’s Have a Chat</em></td>
<td>1968-1969</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<td>Folder 13</td>
<td><em>New Mexico</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
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<td>Folder 14</td>
<td><em>Orphic Lute</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td>Folder 15</td>
<td><em>Prairie Poet</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td>Folder 16</td>
<td><em>Sonnet Cinquain Tanka Haiku (SCTH)</em></td>
<td>1969-1972</td>
<td>4 items</td>
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<td>Folder 17</td>
<td><em>Swordsman Review</em></td>
<td>1968-1969</td>
<td>3 items</td>
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<td>Folder 18</td>
<td><em>Today’s Family</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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<td><strong>BOX 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Davis, Anne Pence</strong></td>
<td><strong>1960-1971</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 items</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Theta Sigma Phi award certificate</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1 item</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Folder 2  *The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch* – notice relating to braille and tape editions  n.d.  2 items

Folder 3  *The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch* – Braille edition  n.d.  1 item

Folder 4  *The Top Hand of Lone Tree Ranch* – leather-bound copy  1960  1 item

Folder 5  Audiotape of interview with Meg Healy, KIXL  1971  1 item

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS  DAVIS, Anne Pence, 1929-1976  
373  1901-1982

Correspondence, photographs, scrapbooks, publications and associated material relating to the literary career of Anne Pence Davis, a poet, reviewer, novelist, and author of juvenile fiction who grew up in Bowling Green, Kentucky and lived in Wichita Falls, Texas after her marriage.  
5 boxes.  46 folders.  724 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs, audiotape.  
1973.86.1

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Achning, Estellyn Allday, 1909-2003  B1,F3
Acree, Fred, 1878-1947  B1,F4,5
Allred, James V., 1899-1959  B1,F3
Allred, Joe Betsy (Miller), 1905-1993  B1,F3,7
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Briley, Alice S., 1914-1998  B1,F6
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Davis, Richard Earl “Dick,” 1903-1957 – Photo – B1,F8
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Keel, James “Blackfoot” – Photo – B1,F6
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World War II, 1939-1945 – Bundles for Britain, Inc. – Relating to    B1,F5

**SEE** or **SEE ALSO**

Merk, Saul
See:
    Johnson, Marie Engle

Niedermeier/Jeffrey  06/30/2011