



Mississippi University
for Women
A Tradition of Excellence for Women and Men

University Archives Inventory

Accession Number: 1-1103

Title: Emma Ody Pohl Papers

Date: 1907-1955

Bulk Date:

Extent: 3 boxes

Creator: Emma Ody Pohl

Administrative/Biographical Notes: Emma Ody Pohl was born in the Delta region near Greenville, Mississippi in 1880. During President Henry Whitfield's tenure as state superintendent in Mississippi, he had received news of the reputation of Miss Pohl. President Whitfield wanted to implement changes to the then current state of the Physical Education programs. Miss Pohl, known as Whitfield's protégé, was enlisted at the Industrial Institute and College (now Mississippi University for Women) to revitalize the level of activity of students at the college.

Pohl's long tenure at Industrial Institute and College and Mississippi State College for Women was full of implementations that would change the history of the university forever. Emma Ody Pohl, known as a dynamic young teacher, served in the Physical Education department from 1907 until her retirement in 1955. Pohl was highly popular with students and strived to bridge the gap of the relationships between students and administrators. Under those nearly five decades, Pohl vitalized school spirit and added aesthetic value to the school through her use of ceremonies and productions.

Emma Ody Pohl was responsible for many valuable contributions to the university. She assisted in innovations under the Whitfield Administration. These innovations included immediately implementing dance classes, May Day ceremonies, and physical education courses that became mandatory for all students. Pohl had an aesthetic dance class that featured an original burlesque wedding. This would eventually form the Junior-Freshman wedding, which symbolized friendship and school loyalty. *Les Sylphides* and the *Masque of Columbus* were popular ballets led by Pohl on school campus. Also, under the advisement of Emma Ody Pohl, the first coed dances were created.

Pohl set forth many traditions on the campus of the university. Under her direction, at least one event each year was sponsored by the Physical Education department. Among her most notable contributions were the Zouave marching drills. Zouave was a Mississippi State College for Women trademark. These French military-inspired drills were in effect from 1912 until Pohl's retirement in 1955. It was revived again once in 1978. Another notable contribution was the creation of the university's old Alma Mater, in which she collaborated on this with Frances Jones Gaither, an alumna and best-selling novelist in the 1940s. Pohl would also collaborate on other class songs and would be responsible for many other programs and pageants on campus.



The end of the Pohl era came in the 1950s. She retired as the head of the physical education department in 1955. She later died on June 23, 1966. Pohl has been remembered for her accolades through many publications, scholarship, and two gymnasia at Mississippi University for Women that were named in her honor (sponsored by her niece and alumnae, Marie Stark). Emma Ody Pohl will also be remembered for the impacts that she made on many students' lives and the colleagues who surrounded her.

Scope and Content Notes: There is significant overlap between this collection and the Marie Charlotte Stark Papers. A number of objects belonging to this collection were housed in the museum and may be located in Miscellaneous object collection. There are also some pieces not currently in possession of the archives, including a series of porcelain ballerinas currently located in Orr Annex.

Collection focuses on Pohl's political work, travel, and accolades from the campus and community.

System of Arrangement: The Emma Ody Pohl Papers are not purposefully arranged.

Conditions Governing Access: The collection is open for research use.

Physical Access:

Technical Access:

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Language: English

Finding aids:

Custodial History:

Immediate Source of Acquisition:

Appraisal/Destruction:

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Existence and Location of Originals:

Existence and Location of Copies:

Related Archival Materials: Marie Charlotte Stark Papers

Publication Note:

Notes:

Description Control: Description based on DACS 2nd Edition. Access points based on Library of Congress Subject Headings and Name Authority File. Finding aid created by Derek Webb, 2015.



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