

Inventory of the

Zelnis/Smith Family

Dixon, Illinois

Collection

in the

Regional History Center

RC 342

INTRODUCTION

Kathy Smith donated the Zelnis/Smith Family Collection to the Regional History Center on May 20, 2015. Additional materials were given on June 2, 2015.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center, literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no access restrictions to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 3.5
Number of containers: 5
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 342

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Records in the Zelnis/Smith Family Collection date from 1909 to 2005. Mr. G.B. Smith and Mrs. Valaria Zelnis Smith of DeKalb, Illinois are primary family members featured in the collection.

The arrangement is loosely by subject in alphabetical order and secondarily by date. The collection is divided into two series: Family Papers and Artifacts. The first series consists of family papers including financial records, WWII papers, correspondence, photos, newspapers, and school documents. Also, records related to the family and their friends and neighbors can be found under the first series. The second series consists of artifacts: hats and vintage hat boxes listed in alphabetical order.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

G.B. "Buddy" Smith was born on September 8, 1907 in Abilene, Texas. He attended Waco High School for one year and left in 1924. Buddy joined the United States Army on August 2, 1942 at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. He specialized in carpentry, landscape design, roofing, and form building. On October 26, 1945, Buddy earned an American Theater Campaign Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, and a Victory Medal. On October 31, 1945 in Tyndall Field, Florida, Mr. Smith was discharged from the Army in good standing due to his physical conditions. He served for a total of three years. In 1950, Buddy completed his training to become a furniture repairman at Yesteryear Gift and Upholstery Shoppe Schools and Colleges in DeKalb, Illinois. During his time of service, he met a woman named Valaria (sometimes spelled Valeria) Zelnis who later became his wife. Mr. Smith passed away on December 7, 1994 leaving behind his wife and only child, Kathleen "Kathy" Smith.

Valaria "Violet" Zelnis Smith was born November 23, 1913 in DeKalb, Illinois and remained here all her life. Her parents, Mr. Charles "Chas" and Mrs. Pauline M. Zelnis were both

originally from Lithuania but relocated the DeKalb before her birth. Violet had one brother named Michael "Mike" and three sisters named Florence, Matilda, and Selma. Sadly, Selma died at the early age of six. Michael, born August 27, 1910 and died on February 18, 1983. He served in the U.S. World War II Army from 1941-1963 with G.B Smith. Matilda was born around 1921 and later married Al Schemett and begin a family of her own. She graduated from DeKalb High School and became a member of the DeKalb Woman's Club, the Business and Professional Woman's Club, and the Kishwaukee Community Hospital Auxiliary. She married G.B. on August 16, 1944 in DeKalb and later gave birth to daughter Kathy. She retired in 1978 from working as an Internal Auditor at the First National Bank in DeKalb. Violet remained a loyal member of the St. Mary Catholic Church in DeKalb until her passing on November 8, 2010.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

DeKalb (Ill.)
DeKalb Township High School
Malta Schools
Northern Illinois State Teachers College
Northern Illinois University
Photograph Album
Photographs
Smith Family
United States. Army.
Zelnis Family

COLLECTION INVENTORY

SERIES I. Family Papers

1	1	Charles "Chas" Zelnis Financial Records, 1915-1956
	2	DeKalb Fuel and Mercantile Company Certificate for Shares of Stock, April 1909
	3	G.B. Smith Veterans Records, 1934-1950
	4	G.B. Smith Correspondence, 1945-1950
	5	Photographs, 1927-1943
	6	Clippings, 1974, n.d.
	7	The Barb Extra, May 6, 1929
	8-9	The Barb, DeKalb Township High School, 1930-1931
	10-13	DeKalb High School Kalibre Yearbook, 1928-1931
	14	DeKalb High School Commencement Programs, 1931, 1963
2	1	DeKalb High School and Grade School Band Spring Concert Program, March 20, 1942
	2	DeKalb High School Class of 1931 Reunion, 1956-1981
	3	DeKalb High School Newsletters, July 1976-July 1986
	4	DeKalb Community Schools Directory, 1957-1958
	5	Malta High School Baccalaureate and Commencement Programs, 1983-1989
	6	Dear Diary, Women's Department of Physical Education, Northern Illinois State Teachers College, n.d.
	7	Kathleen Smith Kindergarten Progress Report, Ellwood School, 1950-1951
	8	Valaria's Certificate for Excellence in Writing, 1926
	9	Valaria Zelnis, My School Day Autobiography, Illinois, May 1927
	10	DeKalb County Year Book, 1957
	11	St. Mary's Church Financial Statement, 1966
	12	Isa Bella School of Dancing, Spring Review Programs, 1954-1957
	13	Landmarks of the Barb City (DeKalb) by Stephen Bigolin, 2005
	14	Street Guide of DeKalb and Sycamore, n.d.
	15	Fourth Annual Old English Madrigal Dinner Program, Northern Illinois University, December 4-7, 1967
	16	Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Annual Report, 1977
	17	Sixty Years of Woolworth, 1939
	18	Sonja Henie Fifth Transcontinental Tour presented by Hollywood Ice Productions Chicago, 1941
	19	The Flexigun, Fort Meyers, Florida, August 26, 1944

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	4
2	20	Hemisfair Official Souvenir Guidebook, 1968	
3 OV		Chicago Tribune October 18, 1942 Illinois 68 Newspaper, February 4, 1986 Zelnis Family Photo Albums (2), 1926-1943	
SERIES II. Artifacts			
4		Consumers Millinery Stores, Inc. (DeKalb) hat box; hats (5)	
5		Verta Hat Shop (DeKalb) hat box; hats (4)	