

Mrs. Sam Ray Postcard Collection

The postcard collection of Mrs. Sam (Mildred) Ray is a large collection containing not only postcards of the Kansas City area, but postcards from all over the United States as well as international ones. Many of the area postcards were featured in her local newspaper column.

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Mrs. Sam (Mildred) Ray
Title: Mrs. Sam Ray postcard collection
Dates: 1890-1998
Size: 7 linear feet, 39 boxes, 16,146 postcards
Location: SC58

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Additional physical form available: Selected postcards have been digitized and are online. Published columns are available in photocopied notebook sets as well as in the department's newspaper clipping collection, microfiche, "Ray, Mrs. Sam."

Publication note: Many of Mildred Ray's newspaper columns and accompanying postcards were published in a two volume set, *Post Cards from Old Kansas City*, 1980, 1987 (MVSC Q 977.8411 R26P). According to Vol. I, her weekly postcard column began with a postcard and article on Petticoat Lane in the *Kansas City Times* on July 26, 1966. She continued writing the articles in the *Kansas City Star* and *Times* until 1991.

Related collections in other repositories: Mildred Kittell (Mrs. Sam) Ray (1895-1996) Collection (KC0024), Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Kansas City.

Acquisition information: Gift, 1996, Mrs. Sam Ray estate.

Custodial History: Mrs. Ray indicated in the book, *Post Cards from Old Kansas City*, that she inherited old postcard albums and loose cards from her Uncle Allen and Aunt Angie Fisher.

Citation note: Mrs. Sam Ray postcard collection (SC58), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

Mildred Kittell Ray was born in Halstead, Kansas, on September 22, 1895. She attended school at Westport High in Kansas City, Missouri, and graduated from Canyon City High School in Colorado. After earning a teaching degree from the Kansas State Teacher's College in Emporia, Mrs. Ray taught in Kansas City Schools. She married Sam Ray in 1918, and the couple had three children. But it was her public persona as "The Postcard Lady" that brought her mention as an avid collector of postcards (buttons, too).

Mrs. Ray, at the age of 72, began her column in the *Kansas City Times* and *Kansas City Star* entitled "A Postcard From Old Kansas City". As the title indicates, the article presented an historical image of some aspect of Kansas City and, under the byline of Mrs. Sam Ray, the author provided the background for the picture. Her research was impeccable and her columns ran for 23 years. They proved to be extremely popular with the public, and two selected sets of articles were collected and published in two volumes, the first volume won a national design award. When she died in 1996 at the age of 100, her collection of postcards was left to the library where Mrs. Ray conducted most of her research in the Missouri Valley Room. Over the years she built a friendly rapport with the librarians.

Scope and content note

The Mrs. Sam Ray Postcard Collection consists of over 16,000 postcards as well as materials associated with Mrs. Ray's writing career. It is arranged by type of material. Subjects in the postcards include Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas, and other states of the United States as well as a large number of foreign countries. It also contains an assortment of other topics as humor, holidays, etc. and card format as wood, leather, copper, etc. A break down includes: Kansas City, 4,969; Missouri, 930; Kansas, 711; States, 4,215; Countries, 1,575; General Categories, 2,678; and Holidays, 1,068.

In addition to these images, the Ray collection includes the historical articles that accompanied many of the cards in her column "Postcards from Old Kansas City". Mrs. Ray kept notebooks of her clipped articles onto which the original postcard had been affixed. Black-and-white and color photocopies of these notebooks were made, and the notebook cards have been kept together, annotated with their original book and page number, as well as the number used to create the Web-based version of the collection. Many other cards and materials in the collection also have been annotated with a code corresponding to the item's location within the original collection. Photocopies of other postcard albums were also made before the cards in those albums were incorporated into the larger collection.

The items that are related to Mrs. Ray's career as a writer include: correspondence; research materials such as newspaper clippings and handwritten notes; draft, manuscript, and published versions of early, "pre-postcard" historical articles; postcard articles that were rejected by the publisher; and the texts of lectures and presentations given by Mrs. Ray. Graphic materials make up another part of the collection, with items like advertising envelopes, ephemera from Emery, Bird, Thayer, and a number of photographs. An audio tape of a speech given by Dick Ray (Mrs. Ray's son), on February 13, 1998, at the official debut of the Library's online version of the newspaper column is included in the collection.

Both the postcard images and the articles are available above under "View Collection Records." The column ran in the *Kansas City Star* and *Kansas City Times* from 1968 until 1991, and the reproductions made available at this Web site are done so with the permission of the *Star*. The articles are presented here as they originally appeared in the newspapers, with the eccentricities of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling intact. A full inventory of the collection is included under "Collection Inventory" below. These inventories include: inventory of each box, subject listing of Kansas City postcards, subject listing for both Missouri and Kansas postcards, list of states and a list of countries, a list of general categories and a list of holidays.

Collection Inventory**Box 1**

- Folder 1 - Certificate of Appreciation, Jackson County Historical Society
- Folder 2 - Commercial Publications--Buttons
- Folder 3 - Commercial Publications--Miscellaneous
- Folder 4 - Commercial Publications--Postcards
- Folder 5 - Correspondence - From Mrs. Ray - 1958-1990 (Scattered)
- Folder 6 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - 1940s
- Folder 7 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - 1950s
- Folder 8 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - 1960-1962
- Folder 9 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - 1963-1968
- Folder 10 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - 1970s
- Folder 11 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - 1980s
- Folder 12 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - 1990s

Box 2

- Folder 1 - Correspondence - To Mrs. Ray - undated
- Folder 2 - Correspondence - To Other People (relatives, etc.) [arranged by recipient]
- Folder 3 - Graphic Materials - Advertising Envelopes
- Folder 4 - Graphic Materials - Brochures
- Folder 5 - Graphic Materials - Cards, Advertising and Business
- Folder 6 - Graphic Materials - Cards, Greeting; Bound postcards (blank)
- Folder 7 - Graphic Materials - Emery, Bird, Thayer Ephemera
- Folder 8 - Graphic Materials - Miscellaneous
- Folder 9 - Graphic Materials - Photographs - Personal and Family
- Folder 10 - Graphic Materials - Photographs - Miscellaneous
- Folder 11 - Graphic Materials - Photographs - Postcards
- Folder 12 - Lectures and Presentations given by Mrs. Ray
- Folder 13 - Newspaper Clippings - About Mrs. Ray
- Folder 14 - Newspaper Clippings - Buttons
- Folder 15 - Newspaper Clippings - Clay County, Missouri
- Folder 16 - Newspaper Clippings - Holidays
- Folder 17 - Newspaper Clippings - Indians
- Folder 18 - Newspaper Clippings - Jesse James
- Folder 19 - Newspaper Clippings - Johnson County, Kansas
- Folder 20 - Newspaper Clippings - Kansas City
- Folder 21 - Newspaper Clippings - Miscellaneous
- Folder 22 - Newspaper Clippings - Mormons
- Folder 23 - Newspaper Clippings - Postcards

Box 3

- Folders 1 & 2 - Notes - Research
- Folder 3 - Notes - Research; Sources of Cards
- Folders 4 & 5 - Postcard Albums - Photocopies - Electric Park
- Folder 6 - Postcard Albums - Photocopies - Green Album, Primarily Kansas City, Missouri
- Folders 7 & 8 - Postcard Albums - Photocopies - Holidays
- Folder 9 - Postcard Albums - Photocopies - Kansas City, Kansas
- Folders 10-19 - Postcard Notebooks - Miscellaneous Materials - Books 1 - 10
- Folder 20 - Postcard Notebooks - Tables of Contents

Box 4

- Folders 1 - 10 - Postcard Notebooks - Photocopies - Books 1 - 10

Box 5

- Folders 1 - 10 - Postcard Notebooks - Photocopies, Color - Books 1 - 10

Box 6

- Folder 1 - Receipts - Cards Purchased
- Folder 2 - Stamps
- Folder 3 - Writing - Articles - Non-Postcard (photocopies)
- Folder 4 - Writing - Articles - Non-Postcard - "1st Public Library" - Draft, Manuscript, Notes
- Folder 5 - Writing - Articles - Non-Postcard - "Indians" - Draft, Manuscript, Notes
- Folder 6 - Writing - Articles - Non-Postcard - "Lead Soldiers" - Draft, Notes
- Folder 7 - Writing - Articles - Non-Postcard - Miscellaneous Topics - Drafts, Notes
- Folder 8 - Writing - Articles - Non-Postcard - "Watkins Mill" - Draft, Manuscript, Notes
- Folder 9 - Writing - Articles - Non-Postcard - Receipts for Published Items, 1958-1967
- Folder 10 - Writing - Articles - Postcard - Annotated Tearsheet Envelopes - photocopies, 1968-1991, scattered
- Folders 11-19 - Writing - Articles - Postcard - Photocopies, by date (from tearsheets), 1968 - 1976

Box 7

- Folder 1 - Writing - Articles - Postcard - Receipts for Published Items, 1968-1991
- Folder 2 - Writing - Articles - Postcard - Rejected Articles
- Folder 3 - Writing - *Postcards from Old Kansas City* - v.1 (3c.) & v.2 (1c.)
- Folder 4 - Writing - *Postcards from Old Kansas City* - Advertisements
- Folder 5 - Writing - *Postcards from Old Kansas City* - Miscellaneous Associated Materials

Box 8

- Notebooks of Notes, Original Card Dividers, Audio Tape of Dick Ray speech, February 13, 1998

Box 9

- Indexes to Postcard Notebooks

Box 10 and 11

- Online Postcards with Articles, Books 1-10

Boxes 12 - 18

- Postcards, **Kansas City** related

Boxes 19 - 20

- Postcards, **Missouri** related

Boxes 21 - 22

- Postcards, **Kansas** related

Boxes 23 - 28

- Postcards, **United States** related

Boxes 29 - 31

- Postcards, **Foreign** related

Boxes 32 - 38

- Postcards, **Subjects**

Box 39

- Oversize Postcards, Advertising Cards, and Other Graphic Materials

Postcard Categories - Kansas City, Missouri - Number in parentheses which includes duplicates - 4,969 Postcards

- Airports - KCI (2) and Municipal (21)
- Apartments - (14)
- Banks - Commerce (27); Federal Reserve (3); Fidelity (2); First National (12); and Miscellaneous (2)
- Bridges - ASB (3); Hannibal (15); Intercity Viaduct (24); 12th St. Viaduct (4); and Miscellaneous (58)
- Buildings - American Royal (5); Board of Trade (8); City Hall on 4th St. (34); Courthouse on 5th St. (33); Courthouse on 12 St. (8); Convention Hall, 2nd (47); Federal Building at 8th and Grand-1st (39); Federal Building at 8th and Grand-2nd (3); Federal Building on 12th St. (1); Kansas City Power and Light (12); Kansas City Star (3); Livestock Exchange (9); R. A. Long (15); Miscellaneous (36); Municipal Auditorium (31); New York Life (3); Post Office (8); Rialto (3); Scarritt (13); Sharp (2); Shawnee Mission (6); Telephone (2); Waldheim (3); Work House (13); and YMCA (7)
- Businesses - Emery, Bird Thayer (24); John Taylor (8); Miscellaneous (101)
- Cemeteries - (30)
- Churches - Baptist (17); Catholic (20); Christian (27); Christian Science (21); Congregational (31); Episcopal (14); Jewish (4); LDS (1); Methodist (35); Miscellaneous (4) Presbyterian (11); and RLDS (7)
- Clubs - Elks (5); Evanston (8); Ivanhoe Temple (3); KC Country (15); Kansas City (3); Masonic Temple (6); Miscellaneous (7); Scottish Rite Temple on 15th St. (5); Scottish Rite Temple on Linwood (1); and Shriners (7)
- Country Club Plaza - (89)
- Crown Center - (7)
- Disasters - (3)
- East Bottoms - (8)

- Floods - (6), 1 folder
- Fountains - American War Mothers (1); Concourse (1); Country Club Residential District (1); Fitzsimmons (1); Meyer Circle (10); Muse of the Missouri (1); Paseo, 9th St. (12); Paseo, 15th St. (4); Volker (4)
- Hospitals - General (20); Menorah (7); Miscellaneous (13); Research (12); St. Joseph's, 7th St. (12); St. Joseph's, Linwood (9); St. Luke's (7); St. Mary's (14); Thornton & Minor (4); Trinity Lutheran (2) KU Med Center (11)
- Hotels - Aladdin (2); Ambassador (5); Baltimore (38); Coates House (13); Continental (10); Densmore (3); Kupper (3); Midland (6); Miscellaneous (30); Muehlebach (34); Phillips (12); Pickwick (4); President (12); Raphael (4); Saint Regis (2) Savoy (20); Westgate (6); Westin-Crown Center (3)
- The Junction - (14)
- Lakes - (23)
- Liberty Memorial - (44)
- Libraries - (19)
- Memorials - (14)
- Mills - (1)
- Miscellaneous - (64)
- Museums - Hair Museum (3); Kansas City Museum (6); Nelson-Atkins (21)
- Parks - Allis Plaza (8); Budd (9); Electric, 1st (3); Electric, 2nd (113); Fairmount (27); Forest (4); Grove (13); Holmes Square (13); Hyde (4); Loose (10); Mt. Washington (20); North Terrace (125); Observation (3); Parade (7); Penn Valley (108); Plaza on Independence Avenue (5); Roanoke (16); Rockhill (10); Spring Valley (7); Swope (128); Troost (4); Washington (2); West Terrace (23); Winwood Beach (2)
- Priests of Pallas - 1908 (39); 1909 (62); 1910 (40)
- Railroad Stations (not Union Station) - (13)
- Residences - (34)
- Restaurants - (43)
- Riverboats - (34)
- Rivers & Creeks - Blue River (64); Brush Creek (15); Kansas River (7); Missouri River (17); Mt. Washington (2); Brook, Unidentified (1)
- Schools - Central High School (8); Loretto Academy (4); Manual High School (18); Miscellaneous (17); Northeast High School (7); St. Teresa's Academy (14); Sweeney Auto (3); University of Kansas City (5); Westport High School (17)
- Skylines - (111)
- Stadiums - (4)
- Statues - Pioneer Mother (12); Scout (9); George Washington (6)
- Stockyards - American Hereford Association Building (2); American Royal (4); Livestock Exchange Building (16); Stockyards (29)
- Straley Collection - (20)
- Streets - 8th (4); 10th (14); 12th (3); Admiral (1); Armour (23); Baltimore (3); Benton (1); Broadway (1); Brookside (1); Cliff Drive (48); Kersey Coates Drive (47); Delaware (1); Gillham (9); Gladstone (21); Grand (15); Independence Avenue/Boulevard (20); Linwood (11); Main (26); McGee (1); Manheim (2); Mill Creek Drive (5); Nelson Drive (4); Oak Road (1); Park Drive (7); Paseo (213); Pembroke Lane (1); Petticoat Lane (35); Roanoke (5); Rockhill (8); Scarritt Boulevard (7); Southwest Trafficway (2); Swope Parkway (1); Troost (2); Unidentified (1); Union Avenue (1); Valentine Road (14); Walnut (9); Ward Parkway (4); Warwick (3)
- Theaters - Grand Opera House (4); Midland (2); Miscellaneous (10); Newman (4); Orpheum (6); Willis Wood (23)
- Trails - (14)
- Transportation - (1)
- Union Station - (87)
- West Bottoms - (17)

- Zoo - (20)
- Folders - (17)
- Notebook Cards - (673)

Postcard Categories - Missouri - 930 Postcards

- State
- A - B - Anderson, Arrow Rock, Berger, Bethany, Birch Tree, Bolckow, Boonville, Branson, Brookfield, Butler
- C - D - Camdenton, Cameron, Cape Girardeau, Carthage, Cassville, Chillicothe, Clarence, Clinton, Columbia, Conception, Defiance, Dixon
- E - F - Elk Springs, El Dorado Springs, Excelsior Springs, Fair Play, Farber, Florida, Fort Leonard Wood, Freeman, Fulton
- G - I - Gallatin, Gasconade, Glasgow, Ha Ha Tonka, Hannibal, Harrisonville, Hermann, Holden, Hollister, Houston, Independence
- J - L - Jefferson City, Joplin, Kearney, Kirksville, Lake of the Ozarks, Lake Taneycomo, Lamar, Lawson, Lexington, Liberty, Little Blue, Louisiana
- M - O - Marceline, Marshall, Moberly, Monegaw Springs, Mountain Grove, Neosho, Nevada, Noel, Osage, Osage Beach, Osceola, The Ozarks
- P - R - Palmyra, Parkville, Peculiar, Platte City, Plattsburg, Pleasant Hill, Queen City, Richards, Rich Hill, Rock Bridge
- S - W - Saint Charles, Saint Joseph, Saint Louis, Sainte Genevieve, Savannah, Sedalia, Seymour, Sibley, Smithville, Springfield, Tipton, Warrensburg, Webb City, Weston, West Plains, Windsor, Wright City

Postcard Categories - Kansas - 711 Postcards

- State
- A - C - Abilene, Argentine, Arkansas City, Atchison, Baldwin, Beloit, Bonner Springs, Burdick, Camp Funston, Chanute, Chapman, Cherryvale, Cimarron, Clay Center, Coffeyville, Concordia, Council Grove
- D - G - Dodge City, El Dorado, Ellsworth, Emporia, Enterprise, Falun, Fort Riley, Fort Scott, Fowler, Greensburg
- H - J - Halstead, Hanover, Hays, Herington, Hesston, Hollenberg, Holton, Horton, Hutchison, Iola, Jewell, Junction City
- K - M - Kansas City, Kiowa, Lansing, Lawrence, Leavenworth, Leonardville, Lewis, Lincoln, Lindsborg, Lyons, McPherson, Manhattan, Marquette, Medicine Lodge, Minneapolis, Moline
- N - P - Newton, Norton, Oberlin, Olathe, Osage City, Osawatomie, Ottawa, Overland Park, Oxford, Parsons, Pawnee, Pittsburg, Pomeroy, Pratt
- R - S - Radium, Rosedale, Rossville, Sabetha, Salina, Scammon, Seneca, Strong City, Syracuse
- T - Y - Tonganoxie, Topeka, Troy, Valley Falls, Wadsworth, Wakeeney, Wamego, Wellington, Wichita, Wilson, Winfield, Yates Center

Postcard Categories - General Categories

- A - C - Advertising (8); African Americans (55); Airplanes (2); Animals (34); Art (21); Automobiles and other vehicles (13); Boats & Ships (34); Bridges (126); Buster Brown (4); Buttons (6); Calendars (2); Chatauqua (1); Children (19); Circus (50); Cloth (35); Copper (3); Cowboys & Western Scenes (102)
- D - F - Disasters (22); Embossed (41); Exaggerations (4); Expositions (184); Flags (15); Flowers (47); Food (3)
- G - L - Gibson Girls (44); Greetings as Best Wishes (31), Congratulations (8), Greetings (47), Sentimental (40), Other (23); Hallmark Reprints (12); Humorous (248); Indians (90); Jesse James (87); Kewpies (11); Leather (23); Lighthouses (24)
- M - Q - Mansions (33); Military (27); Mills (8); Miscellaneous & Unidentified (39); Motion Picture Industry (53); Music (1); Pastoral Scenes (42); People (8); Personal, Mrs. Ray (62); Poetry (30); Presidents (213); Professions & Industries (86); Quotations (8)
- R - W - Real Photo (50); Religious (4); Swimming (54); Trains (258); Trick, Attachment, Gimmick (36); Tuck's (187); Winter (4); Wood (2)
- Notebook Cards - (24)

Postcard Categories - Holidays

- April Fool's Day (1)
- Birthday - (124)
- Christmas - (412)
- Easter - (180)
- Halloween - (21)
- Independence Day - (16)
- Labor Day - (1)
- Leap Year - (10)
- Lincoln's Birthday - (5)
- Memorial/Decoration Day - (4)
- New Year - (95)
- Saint Patrick's Day - (29)
- Thanksgiving - (26)
- Valentine's Day - (112)
- Washington's Birthday - (20)

Postcard Categories - States Represented-minus Kansas and Missouri

- A - C - Alabama (20); Alaska (56); Arizona (63); Arkansas (92); California (619); Colorado (482); Connecticut (27)
- D - I - Delaware (1); District of Columbia (103); Florida (85); Georgia (18); Hawaii (45); Idaho (12); Illinois (246); Indiana (42); Iowa (55)
- K - M - Kentucky (14); Louisiana (73); Maine (26); Maryland (15); Massachusetts (152); Michigan (98); Minnesota (46); Mississippi (16); Montana (32)
- N - Nebraska (46); Nevada (10); New Hampshire (30); New Jersey (52); New Mexico (85); New York (218); North Carolina (22); North Dakota (5)
- - T - Ohio (109); Oklahoma (71); Oregon (123); Pennsylvania (93); Puerto Rico (12); Rhode Island (26); South Carolina (11); South Dakota (34); Tennessee (41); Texas (194)
- U - W - Utah (147); Vermont (12); Virginia (83); Washington (178); West Virginia (4); Wisconsin (73); Wyoming (94)
- USA (all states) - (2)

Postcard Categories - Countries - 1,575 Postcards

- A - D - Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic
- E - K - Egypt, Fiji, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya
- M - P - Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal
- R - S - Russia, Saint Vincent, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland
- T - Z - Trinidad, Uganda, Uruguay, Vatican, Venezuela, Virgin Islands, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Processed by Special Collections Librarian Stuart Hinds, 1996-1999.