

CG Barnett, Mary Jane (1908-1997), Papers, 1913-1997  
4 1.6 cubic feet (24 folders), 1 film reel, 1 videocassette

This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri](http://The State Historical Society of Missouri). If you would like more information, please contact us at [research@shsmo.org](mailto:research@shsmo.org).

## INTRODUCTION

The collection of Mary Jane Barnett contains correspondence, photographs, diaries, scrapbooks, business-related trade journal materials, a Narcotic Register, and miscellaneous papers for Mary Jane “Miss Jane” Barnett and her life and business partner, Elaine “Tommie” Davis.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The collection was donated to *The State Historical Society of Missouri* by Evelyn Boardman on 7 April, 2015 (Accession No. CGA0006). An addition was made 23 May, 2016 by Cathy Crites (Accession No. CGA0006.1).

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary Jane “Miss Jane” Barnett was born in Litchfield, Illinois on July 19, 1908 and died April 15, 1997. She was buried in Carrollton City Cemetery in Carrollton, Illinois. She was the daughter of William C. “Claud” Barnett, 1875-1937, and Bertha C. (Waggoner) Barnett, 1880-1956. She had one sister, Elizabeth L. (Barnett) Doyle, 1912-1999. Barnett attended schools in Illinois and, after graduating college, she moved to Missouri to teach. Barnett taught for seven years beginning at Hornersville, then moving to Diehlstadt, and finally Sikeston. While in Sikeston, she met Elaine “Tommie” Davis.

Elaine “Tommie” Davis was born in East Prairie, Missouri on October 18, 1911. Davis was born to Elgin C. Davis, 1884-1956, and Henrietta E. Davis, 1885-1957. She was the eldest of three children. Annie and Maxine Davis were her sisters. She graduated from Southeast Missouri State University and, following graduation, she was a teacher, for a short time, in East Prairie and at SEMO University. “Tommie” Davis died January 4, 1981 and was buried at Memorial Park Cemetery in Sikeston, Missouri.

Barnett and Davis owned the Co-op Cut Rate which was opened by Davis in 1933 and was joined, in partnership, by Barnett, in 1938. It was located at 40 North Main Street, Cape Girardeau, Missouri. The business continued operations, under the management of “Miss Jane” after Davis’ death until it closed in 1991.

Barnett and Davis loved entertaining and supporting the arts. In 1958, they established the Davis-Barnett Awards. These scholarships were presented annually for twenty-two years to the outstanding members, in seven categories, of Southeast Missouri State University’s Theatre Department.

This collection is a written and photographic record of the lives of Mary Jane Barnett and Elaine Davis. “Miss Jane” and “Tommie” met in 1937 and became business and life partners by 1938. This relationship lasted until Davis’ death in 1981. The materials reflect their lifestyle and business philosophy for five decades.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection has been arranged into the following five series:

**Correspondence and Papers**  
**Personal**  
**Business**  
**Photographs**  
**Audiovisual**

The **Correspondence and Papers** series contains letters written to Barnett from Davis, family members, friends and, what is believed to be, a pen pal named Raymond Russell Carselowey. One letter recounts the 1937 execution, by hanging, of Fred Adams in Dunklin County, Missouri.

The papers in this series pertain to Barnett's work for Universal Producing Company, of Fairfield, Iowa as a director of amateur theatrical productions of "A Laugh Riot: Corporal Eagen", and her employment as teacher in Southeast Missouri.

The **Personal** series consists of a high school "memory book" belonging to Davis, pages taken from the couple's guest book, Barnett's 1947 and 1959 diaries, and a 1987 calendar/address book belonging to Barnett.

The **Business** series contains material on progressive marketing strategies in the retail drugstore business practices and the implementation of these strategies at the Co-op Cut Rate Drug Store. There is also a Narcotics Register documenting the dispensation of medications regulated by law.

The **Photographs** series spans 1913 to 1991 and captures Barnett and Davis throughout their lives as partners and business women. There are 694 photographs in this collection reflecting their personal relationship, family and friends, business practices, and the region.

The **Audiovisual** series contains one 8mm film from November 1952 and one videocassette c.1950.

## FOLDER LIST

f. 1-7	Correspondence and Papers, 1924-1964
f. 1	Davis, Elaine "Tommie"
f. 2	Barnett, Bertha; Doyle, Elizabeth (Barnett)
f. 3	Correspondence from friends
f. 4-5	Carselowey, Raymond Russell
f. 6	Universal Producing Company
f. 7	MacMurray College (Illinois Woman's College); Sikeston Public Schools
f. 8-12	Personal, 1925-1987
f. 8	1925-29 Memory book, Elaine Davis
f. 9	1934-1943 Guest book
f. 10	1947 Diary, Mary Jane Barnett

	f. 11	1959 Diary, Mary Jane Barnett
	f. 12	1989 Calendar/address book, Mary Jane Barnett
f. 13-15	Business, 1935-1954	
	f. 13	Narcotics Register, 1941-1954
	f. 14	Co-op Cut Rate Scrapbook, 1935-1950
	f. 15	"Drug Topics" Druggists Circular, 1941
f. 16-23	Photographs, 1913-1991	
	f. 16	1919-1940, Photograph album
	f. 17	1913-1919, Photographs
	f. 18	1920-1929, Photographs
	f. 19	1930-1939, Photographs
	f. 20	1940-1949, Photographs
	f. 21	1950-1959, Photographs with a spiral bound "Season's Greeting" album
	f. 22	1960-1969, Photographs
	f. 23	1970-1979, Photographs, 20 slide transparencies
	f. 24	1980-1997, Photographs
		Audiovisual, c.1950, 1952
	r. 1	16 mm film, November 1952
	v.c.1	videocassette, c.1950

## INDEX TERMS

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Southeast Missouri State University	16		y
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