

GUIDE TO THE ALQUIST-SHERMAN FAMILY PAPERS

Biographical overview:

Clara Alquist Sherman, born 1877, died 1944; married Ernest Sherman c. 1910; they had one son named Ernest A. Sherman. Clara was an easel artist who participated in the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project. She was possibly a member in the Artist's Union of Massachusetts and became a member of the Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts. She lived on Eaglebrook Hill in Deerfield where her hobby as an amateur ornithologist gets recorded in her diaries. Examples of her artwork can be found in Memorial Hall Museum and Historic Deerfield, Inc. She is buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery in Deerfield along side her husband.

Her papers include two diaries that depict life during the Great Depression and record her thoughts on her natural surroundings. She details her bird-watching finds and her encounters with the locals of Deerfield. The second volume contains memoranda, sketches, etc. Other papers include WPA correspondence, memoranda, bulletins, and expense accounts; art supply bills; certificate of membership in the Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts; several copies of her 1928 exhibition program, and studio business cards.

Ernest Sherman, son of Nehemiah and Sarah A. Sherman, born May 14, 1870 in Middletown, Connecticut. Married Clara Alquist c. 1910; they had one son, Ernest A. They lived in Deerfield where he became a copyist and illustrator. His work did not merit membership in the Deerfield Valley Artist's Association. Memorial Hall Museum owns three of his paintings. Ernest died on July 17, 1934, of a diabetic coma and is buried along side his wife in Laurel Hill Cemetery in Deerfield.

His papers consist of a typed list of deaths in Deerfield, 1808-1886, a brief list of paintings in Memorial Hall Museum, and an obituary. These papers are in the Miscellany folder.

Ernest A. Sherman, son of Ernest and Clara Alquist-Sherman, born in 1919, died in 1971. He served in the Navy in the Caribbean from 1942-43. Sherman did odd jobs around Deerfield and Greenfield and was an avid motion picture attendee. Residing in Springfield at the Y.M.C.A., he kept records of his visits to the library and to the theaters in town. In the typed obituary of his father, it states that Ernest was insane and lived his life in the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Northampton. This information seems to conflict with the evidence of his diaries.

His papers consist of two diaries, one kept from January 1, 1939, through December 31, 1943, and the second kept for the year 1945. The earlier volume contains information about his wanderings and occasional jobs, along with the mention of shops, restaurants, and a record of all the films he saw at the Garden Theatre in Greenfield. He also records his brief stint in the Navy. The later diary records his trips to the library and films he saw while living in Springfield.

Container list:

Box 1:

Folder 1: Alquist-Sherman, Clara, diaries 1931-1939- 2 items

Folder 2: Alquist-Sherman Miscellany, 1928-1944, n.d.- 15 items

Folder 3: Sherman, Ernest A., diaries, 1939-1943, 1945- 2 items

Box 2:

Folder 1: Works Progress Administration [WPA] Correspondence, 1935-1937: 68 items

Folder 2: WPA printed material, article, booklet, bulletins; Artists Union bulletins; art supply bills; certificate & invitations to Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts, 1936-1938: 86 items