Descriptive Summary

Title: Coralee Burson Davis Collection

Dates: 1937-2010

Collection Number: CPCIC-0002

Creator/Collector: Davis, Coralee Burson

Extent: 1 archive box

Online items available: http://collection.pasadenadigitalhistory.com/cdm/ref/collection/p16237coll6/id/5526

Repository: Pasadena City College

Pasadena, California 91106-2003

Abstract: The collection includes a scrapbook, a photograph and a campus periodical.

Language of Material: English

Access

College records are public records and once fully processed are generally open to research use. The closure of college records is subject to compliance with applicable laws.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Coralee Burson Davis Collection. Pasadena City College

Acquisition Information

Donated by Coralee Burson Davis in 2012.

Biography/Administrative History

Coralee (Cora Lee, Coco) Burson Davis is a Pasadena Junior College alumnus. She was one of a select group of women who served in the military during World War II and performed in Tars and Spars, a touring Coast Guard musical production. Born in 1921 in Eagle Rock, California, Davis was raised in Pasadena, California by her mother and grandparents. As an 11th grader, in 1937 she enrolled at Pasadena Junior College which under the relatively new 6-4-4 educational system included grades 11-14. According to an article in the March 1939 issue of the "Campix" PJC's magazine, Coralee Burson whose photo was featured on the cover, liked drama and performed leading roles in many of the campus' live stage productions. She was popular among the PJC social groups and was seen at many PJC dances. After graduating from high school Davis worked for a brief period at Lockheed Aircraft and then in 1942 when she turned 21, joined the Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARs-"Sempar Paratus—Always Ready"). During her four years with SPARs, in addition to typing at the Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington D.C., she also delivered recruitment speeches and did radio interviews. She is best known however for being cast in the Coast Guard show "Tars and Spars" performing alongside actor/dancer Gower Champion. In 1945 Hollywood produced a full-length feature film of the same title. She was involved in this production as well and concluded her term with SPARs when her obligations for the film ended in 1946. Following her enlistment with SPARs, Davis pursued a career in acting and modeling. In 1948 she married Walter Rathbun. They both had active theater careers until her husband passed away in 1952. Davis then left California ending up in San Juan, Puerto Rico where, in 1956, she met and married Horace Davis. They made their home in Washington D.C. until 1963 when they moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, and opened a travel agency. For more biographical information on Coralee Burson Davis please go to UNCG's (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro) Digital Collection, Women Veterans Historical Project, "WV0222 Coralee Burson Davis Papers" at:

http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/search/collection/WVHP/searchterm/81/field/oldemode/all/conn/and/order/nosort

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection consists of one box which holds a scrapbook, a periodical and a current photograph of Ms. Davis. The scrapbook, which includes many handwritten personal observations, documents the academic and social life of a co-ed in grades eleven and twelve at what was then called Pasadena Junior College (PJC), subsequently renamed Pasadena City College (PCC). In addition to her handwritten notes are Davis' PJC identification cards, invitations to clubs, dance events, and dinners as well as theatre programs and newspaper clippings. The periodical is the March 1939 issue of "Campix" magazine which features a photograph of Ms. Davis. The single photograph is a contemporary color photograph of Ms. Davis taken in 2010.

Indexing Terms
Scrapbooks
Student activities -- United States
World War, 1939-1945
Pasadena High School -- Periodicals
College student newspapers and periodicals
Davis, Coralee Burson
United States. -- Coast Guard. -- Women's Reserve
Pasadena High School (Pasadena, Calif.)
Pasadena Junior College (Pasadena, Calif.)