
Mildred E. Baker Travel Scrapbook Collection: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Diann Benti.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

Photo Archives

1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, California 91108

Phone: (626) 405-2191

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URL: <http://www.huntington.org>

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Overview of the Collection

Title: Mildred E. Baker Travel Scrapbook Collection

Dates (inclusive): 1927-approximately early 1970s

Bulk dates: 1927-1941

Collection Number: photCL 237

Creator: Baker, Mildred E., 1899-1987

Extent: 13 volumes in 6 boxes

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Abstract: This collection contains scrapbooks chiefly containing narratives, snapshots, and clippings documenting summer canyoneering and camping trips to the American Southwest, the Colorado River, and the Canadian Rockies by Mildred E. Baker (1899-1987) in the 1930s and early 1940s, as well as some volumes related to Baker's activities and interest in bookbinding, poetry, and the Woodcraft League of America in upstate New York with bookbinder John F. Grabau (1878-1948).

Language: English.

Access

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Mildred E. Baker Travel Scrapbook Collection, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Volumes 11 and 13, gift of Mildred Baker McVey, March 1974; Volumes 1-10 and 12, gift of McVey, October 1990.

Biographical Note

Mildred E. Baker (later Mildred McVey) (December 23, 1899-March 20, 1987), also known as "Millie," was a secretary for an investment firm and a botanist for the Buffalo Museum of Science in Buffalo, New York. During summers in the 1930s and early 1940s, Baker took extensive camping and canyoneering trips with two friends: teacher Florence A. Huck (1895-1980) and social worker Katherine Crisp, also of Buffalo. In 1940, she took part in the "Nevills Expedition," with Norman Nevills, rafting down the Green and Colorado Rivers from Wyoming to Lake Mead; she became one of the first women to successfully travel the full length of the Colorado River. In the 1940s, she became friends with Otis Marston, river-runner and historian of the Colorado River and Green River regions, and communicated with him about her travel experiences in the American Southwest. In the 1940s, Baker married Philip Rosa, but they later divorced. Around 1948, Baker moved to Encinitas, California, and married Chester Lee McVey (1894-1968) in 1959. They later lived in Laguna Hills, California.

Bibliography

Shaffer, Marguerite S. "Playing American: The Southwestern Scrapbooks of Mildred E. Baker," in *The culture of tourism, the tourism of culture : selling the past to the present in the American southwest*, ed. Hal K. Rothman (Albuquerque : University of New Mexico Press, 2003)

Scope and Content

This collection contains thirteen scrapbooks chiefly containing narratives, snapshots, and clippings documenting summer canyoneering, camping, and tourism trips to the American Southwest, the Colorado River, the Canadian Rockies, and Wyoming by Mildred E. Baker in the 1930s and early 1940s, as well as volumes related to Baker's activities and interest in bookbinding, poetry, and the Woodcraft League of America in Upstate New York with bookbinder John F. Grabau in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Most of these volumes reflect the participation of two Baker's friends from Buffalo: Florence A. Huck and Katherine Crisp, who frequently traveled with Baker and were also involved in bookbinding activities.

Baker's scrapbooks follow a general pattern: they include typescript narratives describing her trips illustrated with her own snapshots and handwritten captions, as well as clippings from magazines and newspapers, occasional bits of poetry, and printed ephemera. Most of the travel volumes include lists of identified flowers, shrubs, trees, ferns, and birds seen on the trip, reflecting Baker's interests in botany and ornithology. Many of the volumes also have additional printed items laid in, with some dating through the early 1970s. All of the volumes are bound in decorative bindings stamped "Grabau," and most have marbled paper over the pasteboards.

Volumes 1-2 and 4-5 reflect Baker's experiences chiefly at Sunset Hill, the summer home and artist's retreat of bookbinder John F. Grabau, near Buffalo, New York, presumably as part of the "Ojenta tribe" of the Woodcraft League of America. These volumes include poetry and photographs of the landscape, camping and other outdoor outings and group events, and bookbinding, including images of binding specimens by both Grabau and Baker.

Many of the volumes document Baker's trips to the American Southwest, including her experience as one of the first women to raft the full-length of the Colorado River as part of the 1940 "Nevills Expedition" led by Norman D. Nevills. Her scrapbook of this trip (volume 11) includes photographs of Nevills and his wife, Doris Nevills, and fellow participants including mining engineer John S. Southworth of Glendale, California, botanist Hugh C. Cutler of the Missouri Botanical Gardens, and future Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. Regular themes among the photographs include depictions of the natural landscape including rock formations, mountains, rivers, and lakes; Native Americans; trading posts; cliff dwellings; petroglyphs; lodgings; and means of transportation including by train, automobile, airplane, horse, and burro.

The volumes consist of:

Volume 1: [Sunset Hill "Christmas" scrapbook album]. 1927-1928

Locations referenced: Sunset Hill estate, Upstate New York

Volume 2: Sunset Hill and Algonquin Park "birthday" scrapbook album]. 1927-1933

Locations referenced: Sunset Hill estate, Upstate New York, and Algonquin Park, Ontario, Canada

Volume 3: Navajo Mountain, 1931

Locations referenced: Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico

Volume 4: Anthology of Sunset Hill (Its Trails and Poets' Glen). 1934-approximately 1938

Locations referenced: Upstate New York

Volume 5: Some poems of Sunset Hill by Mildred E. Baker, Wm. P. Alexander and others. Christmas 1936

Locations referenced: Upstate New York

Volume 6: Memorable Days on Teton Trails. 1934

Locations referenced: Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming

Volume 7: A Glimpse of the Old West. August 16th-September 2nd, 1935

Locations referenced: New Mexico

Volume 8: Wilderness Wanderings in Jasper and Mt. Robson Parks. July 3rd to 23rd 1936

Locations referenced: Alberta, Canadian Rockies

Volume 9: Trail Riding in the Canadian Rockies. July 23 to Aug. 8, 1937

Locations referenced: Alberta, Canadian Rockies

Volume 10: Peace of Rainbow and Canyon. July 2nd to 25th, 1938

Locations referenced: Arizona, Utah

Volume 11: Rough Water. Down the Green and Colorado Rivers from Green River, Wyoming, to Boulder Dam, Nevada. June 20th-August 22nd, 1940

Locations referenced: Wyoming, Utah, Nevada

Volume 12: [Scrapbook of newspaper clippings related to the Nevills expedition]. 1940-1941

Locations referenced: Wyoming, Utah, Nevada

Volume 13: Turquoise Skies and Copper Canyon. 1942

Locations referenced: Arizona, Utah

- [Otis R. Marston Papers](#) (Call number: mssMarston papers) contains correspondence with Baker and a typescript copy of Baker's journal during the Nevills Expedition.

Arrangement

The volumes are arranged chronologically.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the [Huntington Library's Online Catalog](#).

Subjects

Baker, Mildred E., 1899-1987 -- Photographs.
Crisp, Katherine -- Photographs.
Cutler, Hugh C., 1912-1998 -- Photographs.
Goldwater, Barry M. (Barry Morris), 1909-1998 -- Photographs.
Grabau, John F., 1878-1948 -- Photographs.
Grabau, John F., 1878-1948 -- Homes and haunts -- Photographs.
Huck, Florence A. -- Photographs.
Nevills, Norman D., 1908-1949 -- Photographs.
Southworth, John -- Photographs.
Nevills Expeditions -- Photographs.
Woodcraft League of America -- Photographs.
Artist colonies -- New York (State) -- Photographs.
Artist colonies -- New York (State).
Boats and boating -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Bookbinding -- Photographs.
Camping -- Photographs.
Canyoneering -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Cliff-dwellings -- Arizona -- Photographs.
Indians of North America -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
National parks and reserves -- Canada -- Photographs.
National parks and reserves -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Outdoor recreation -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Petroglyphs -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Rapids -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Rivers -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Travel -- Canada -- Photographs.
Travel -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Women travelers -- Canada -- Photographs.
Women travelers -- West (U.S.) -- Photographs.
Alberta -- Photographs.
Arizona -- Photographs.
Canada -- Photographs.
Canadian Rockies (B.C. and Alta.) -- Photographs.
Carlsbad Caverns (N.M.)
Colorado River (Colo.-Mexico) -- Photographs.
Grand Canyon (Ariz.) -- Photographs.
Grand Teton (Wyo.) -- Photographs.
Green River (Wyo.-Utah) -- Photographs.
Louise, Lake (Alta. : Lake) -- Photographs.
Mogollon Mountains (N.M.)
Navajo Mountain (Utah) -- Photographs.
New Mexico -- Photographs.
Rainbow Bridge (Utah) -- Photographs.
Rainbow Bridge National Monument (Utah) -- Photographs.
Upstate New York (N.Y.) -- Photographs.
Utah -- Photographs.
Forms/Genres
Photographs.

Photograph albums.

Poems.

Scrapbooks.

Contributors

Grabau, John F., 1878-1948.

Grabau, John F., 1878-1948, binder.

Huck, Florence A.

Alexander, William P. (William Prindle), 1881-1956.

Box 1

Volumes 1-3

Volume 1

[Sunset Hill "Christmas" scrapbook album]. 1927-1928

Physical Description: volume 15 x 21 cm

Volume containing approximately 48 snapshots from Sunset Hill, the summer home and artist's retreat of bookbinder John F. Grabau, near Buffalo, New York. The photographs include views of the Sunset Hill property, bookbinding classes, binding specimens, and Baker and her friends, presumably members of the "Ojenta tribe" of the Woodcraft League of America, on outdoor outings and dressed in Native American costumes.

With inscription "To Mildred E. Baker, A reminder of pleasant Woodcraft days at Sunset Hill from her friend Tah-ko-dah, Christmas 1927," as well as some clippings, and typescript poems. Binding stamped "Grabau."

Volume 2

[Sunset Hill and Algonquin Park "birthday" scrapbook album]. 1927-1933

Physical Description: volume 20 x 25 cm

Volume containing approximately 120 snapshots of Sunset Hill and a trip to Algonquin Park in Ontario, Canada, with images of Baker and her group of friends, presumably members of the "Ojenta tribe" of the Woodcraft League of America, John F. Grabau, swimming and boating, dressing in Native American costumes, and bookbinding specimens including a display of Baker's bindings from a local book show.

With inscription: "Happy Birthday to Wicaga, Mildred E. Baker from her friends in the Book-binding class, Dec. 23rd. 1929," signed by Florence A. Huck, Lillian E. Prior, Elizabeth B. Rosa, Dorothy Bateman, Donna Ann Hanes, John F. Grabau, Martha B. Harwood, Sally Knight, Katherine Crisp, and J. Bernard Vogle." Also contains clippings, sketches from Algonquin Park, and Christmas cards. Binding stamped "Grabau."

Volume 3

Navajo Mountain. Aug. 1931

Physical Description: volume 16.5 x 23 cm

Volume containing typescript account and approximately 67 snapshots of trip to the American Southwest begun on August 14, 1931, by Baker and Huck, illustrated with pasted clippings, published illustrations and postcards. The photographs and the descriptions document camping, the natural landscape, rock formations, tour guide Jack Wilson and his wife, Katherine Wilson, travel by automobile and burrows, Navajo trading posts, and cliff dwellings. Included are two images and a description of a Navajo "sheep dip," identified as "Navajos dipping sheep and goats in a lime-sulphur solution for 'scabs.' Near Tonalea." Locations include Arizona; Utah; Rainbow Bridge; Surprise Valley; Navajo Mountain; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Puyé cliff dwellings; and the Taos Pueblo. With "Harveycar Motor Cruises through the Great Southwest" map pasted in at back of volume. Binding stamped "Grabau."

Box 2

Volumes 4-5

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- Volume 4 **Anthology of Sunset Hill (Its Trails and Poets' Glen). 1934-approximately 1938**
Physical Description: volume 21 x 17 cm
Volume containing typescript and handwritten poems, dated from 1927-1938, and a typescript dedication address for Poets' Glen, Sunset Hill, on September 30, 1934, by Dr. George B. Neumann. Illustrated with approximately ten photographs.
With handwritten inscription to Baker for her birthday from John F. Grabau, 1934. Leather binding has imprint of Grabau, 1934.
Related Material
Florence Huck's copy of [Anthology of Sunset Hill](#), with an inscription from Baker and Grabau, is held by the Buffalo Central Library.
- Volume 5 **Some poems of Sunset Hill by Mildred E. Baker, Wm. P. Alexander and others. Christmas 1936**
Physical Description: volume 19.5 x 15 cm
Volume with handwritten poems, dated from 1927-1934, illustrated with eight 4 x 6 3/4 inch photographs of natural scenery.
With handwritten inscription, "This book has been engrossed and bound ... by her Friend Florence A. Huck, 1936." Leather binding stamped "Grabau."
- Box 3
Volume 6 **Volumes 6-7**
Memorable Days on Teton Trails. 1934
Physical Description: volume 22 x 27 cm
Volume with typescript detailed narrative and 111 snapshots of a pack trip to Grand Teton National Park from July 14-29, 1934, by Baker, Huck, and Crisp. Includes a list of identified flowers, shrubs, trees, ferns, and birds that were seen. The scrapbook also contains a map of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, as well as newspaper clippings, postcards, and a pamphlet on the Grand Teton National Park from the United States Department of the Interior (1934). Leather binding stamped "Grabau."
- Volume 7 **A Glimpse of the Old West. August 16th-September 2nd, 1935.**
Physical Description: volume 21 x 27 cm
Volume with typescript detailed narrative and approximately 100 snapshots of trip by airplane to New Mexico by Baker and Huck. Includes description of airplane travel. With a list of identified plants, trees, grasses, vines, shrubs, ferns, sedges, birds, mammals, and reptiles that were seen. Images include the airplane, Double S Ranch (near Cliff, New Mexico), Mountain Camp, horses, Mogollon Mountains, El Paso, Texas, and Carlsbad Caverns. With clippings and postcards, and a booklet, "Carlsbad Caverns National Park New Mexico" by Isabelle F. Story (United States Department of the Interior, 1934) and Santa Fe Railroad "Off the Beaten Path by Motor" map.
With Christmas inscription to Baker from John F. Grabau, 1935. Leather binding stamped "Grabau."
- Box 4
Volume 8 **Volumes 8-9**
Wilderness Wanderings in Jasper and Mt. Robson Parks. July 3rd to 23rd 1936
Volume with typescript detailed narrative and 173 snapshots of camping trip to the Canadian Rockies by Baker, Huck, and Crisp. With a birthday inscription to Baker from Huck, December 1936. Includes several magazine photographs, brochure for Brewster's Rocky Mountain Ranch in Jasper, Alberta, and booklet *The Geological Story of Jasper National Park, Canada* by E. M. Kindle (National Parks of Canada, Department of the Interior) and a fold-out map of Jasper Park. Narrative includes a list of identified birds, mammals, butterflies, plants, trees, ferns, and shrubs. Leather binding stamped "Grabau."
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Volume 9

Trail Riding in the Canadian Rockies. July 23 to Aug. 8, 1937**Physical Description:** volume 22 x 27 cm

Volume with typescript narrative and 97 snapshots documenting a trip to the Canadian Rockies by Baker, Huck, and Crisp, and a stay on the Kananaskis Ranch and Brewster Ranch in Alberta. Contains an account of the trail ride and stay at Lake Louise and CPR hotels. A list of herbaceous plants, trees, ferns, butterflies, shrubs, animals, and birds is appended. Also contains a small map of the "Route of the General Trail Ride and the Pow Wow, July 30-Aug. 3, 1937," plus a list of the participants in the Trail Rides party plus song sheet of the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies. Includes articles, photographs, and illustrations about the Trail Riders. In addition, there is a large map of Lake Louise Park; one Christmas letter from Kananaskis Ranch, signed by the whole Brewster family, and 6 magazine photos and 1 magazine with an article on Mt. Assiniboine. Leather binding stamped "Grabau."

Box 5

Volume 10

Volumes 10-11**Peace of Rainbow and Canyon. July 2nd to 25th, 1938.****Physical Description:** volume 22 x 27 cm

Volume with typescript narrative and approximately 200 snapshots of a trip to the Grand Canyon and Rainbow Bridge Canyon by Baker, Huck, and Crisp. A list of identified herbaceous plants, trees, ferns, shrubs, grasses, butterflies, birds, and mammals is appended. Also includes a one-page list of Navajo terms, a map of Indian reservations in Arizona, and some clippings. Includes images of the Grand Canyon, Havasu Canyon, pictographs in Havasu, Mooney Falls, Navajos at Cameron, Jack and Katherine Wilson, Rainbow Bridge, the Colorado River, Surprise Valley, a Navajo weave, Piute Canyon, Betatakin cliff dwellings, Tsegi Canyon, Inscription House ruins, and Inscription Camp. Leather binding stamped "Grabau."

Volume 11

Rough Water. Down the Green and Colorado Rivers from Green River, Wyoming, to Boulder Dam, Nevada. June 20th-August 22nd, 1940**Physical Description:** volume 22 x 27 cm

Volume with typescript narrative, illustrated with approximately 400 photographs, of traveling down the Green and Colorado Rivers, from Green River, Wyoming, to Lake Mead, Nevada, with Norman D. Nevills and his wife, Doris Nevills, of Bluff, Utah; Salt Lake City assayer B. W. Deason; mining engineer John S. Southworth of Glendale, California; botanist Hugh C. Cutler of the Missouri Botanical Gardens; boatman Del Reed; the trip's official photographer Charles W. Larabee of Kansas City, Missouri; and future Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater. Contains descriptions of the river runs, campsites, and animals and birds seen. Includes photographs of camping, traveling in boats marked "Nevills Expedition," river rapids, canyons and rock formations, as well as Native American petroglyphs and messages on rocks from previous expeditions; and the remnants of boat wrecks. Mentions that carrier pigeons were used for sending messages, films, and reports of the expedition's progress directly to the *Salt Lake Tribune-Telegram* newspaper. Also contains newspaper clippings and an article from the magazine *Land of Sunshine* (January 1900, vol. 12, no. 5) titled, "Finding the Colorado." Binding stamped "Grabau."

Items 1-13

Loose photographs 1940-1941

Physical Description: 13 photographs

Set of thirteen chiefly 8 x 10" photographs found in the back of the scrapbooks of the Nevills Expedition. The photographer presumably is C. W. Larabee, official photographer for the expedition down the Colorado and Green River. Photographs consist of:

- Item 1. Mildred E. Baker drinking out of a tin cup
- Items 2-4. The Nevills Expedition packing their 3 boats
- Items 5-7. The Nevills Expedition taking a lunch break and viewing the Colorado River rapids
- Item 8. Walking in the cliff formations near the Colorado River
- Items 9-10. The Nevills Expedition tying up their boats, with views of striated rock formations
- Item 11. Rock formations
- Item 12-13. 5 x 7 in. prints showing Indian petroglyphs found on rock walls.

Box 6

Volume 12

Volumes 12-13

[Scrapbook of newspaper clippings related to the Nevills expedition]. 1940-1941

Physical Description: volume 28 x 25 cm

Volume consisting solely of clippings including a series of newspaper articles written by Doris Nevills, about the Nevills Expedition, 1940-1941, titled "Woman Conqueror of the Colorado," as well as some clippings by other authors and a typescript description of the 1940 expedition by Norman D. Nevills, titled "Descent of the Canyons." No photographs.

Volume 13

Turquoise Skies and Copper Canyon. 1942

Physical Description: volume 25 x 18 cm

Black binder containing a typescript account and 54 snapshots of a pack trip to the American Southwest by Baker, Huck, and Crisp in July 1942, including the Navajo Reservation in Arizona, Monument Valley, Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Canyon in Utah, with poems at end. Contains list of identified birds, animals, grasses, plants, trees, and shrubs. Also includes some magazine clippings.