Guide to the Miss Indian America archive M0810

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Title: Miss Indian America archive
source: Brayer, Herbert Oliver
Identifier/Call Number: M0810
Physical Description: 2.5 Linear Feet(5 boxes: 3 archival boxes and 2 flat boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1945-1984
Date (bulk): 1950s
Abstract: The Miss Indian America archive contains materials pertaining to the Miss Indian America pageant held during All American Indian Days in Sheridan, Wyoming from 1954 to 1984. This pageant was envisioned as an alternative to the Miss America pageant. Contestants in both pageants were young, unmarried women who represented their land of origin. Miss America contestants represented their home states and Miss Indian America contestants represented their tribe. The pageants were very similar and contestants in both demonstrated their talents onstage. Miss Indian America contestants did not wear swimsuits but instead wore traditional tribal dresses. The winner of the Miss Indian America pageant embarked on a speaking tour in order to gain awareness for a charity of her choice and also met with the winner of the Miss America pageant. The Miss Indian America pageant was one of the main events of the American Indian Days which celebrated tribal traditions and events over the course of three days.

Preferred Citation
[identification of item], Miss Indian America archive (M0810). Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.

Access to Collection
The materials are open for research use. Audio-visual materials are not available in original format, and must be reformatted to a digital use copy.

Acquisition Information
This collection was purchased by Stanford University, Special Collections in 1995.

Scope and Contents
The Miss Indian America archive consists of five boxes of materials. Included are photographs of both the Miss Indian America pageant and the All American Indian Days events which took place in Sheridan, Wyoming. The contestants’ applications and multiple judges’ notes are also included in the collection. Herbert O. Brayer, the creator of this collection was heavily involved in the pageant’s organization, and the collection includes his writings, correspondence and newspaper clippings about his research on the Old West. Also included are tourism brochures, event schedules and programs of the All American Indian Days. Of note is a record of Indian tribal songs, prints by Randy Steffan and informational brochures designed for Native American children.

Along with materials about the Miss Indian America pageant are clippings, programs and photographs from the Miss America pageant from 1954-1956.

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Access to Collection
In the 1950s Sheridan, Wyoming resembled Jim Crow-era South with tensions between the Native American population and the white residents. In 1952, a young Crow Indian girl named Lucy Yellow Mule was selected as the Sheridan-WYO-Rodeo Queen leading to a movement to improve the relationships among the community members of Sheridan. Sheridan also won two awards the “Silver Anvil” National Honor Award and the George Washington Honor Medal Freedom Foundation of Valley Forge Pennsylvania for promoting better understanding and tolerance between races. From these two awards, All American Indian Days was established. The event was intended to preserve Indian rituals, tribal games, clothing, art, language and stories.

The Miss Indian America Pageant began in 1954 as part of the All American Indian Days and was held each year in Sheridan, Wyoming. In 1984, the pageant moved to Bismarck, North Dakota where it was held until the mid-1990s. The pageant was intended to select someone who would be a good public relations representative for the Native American community. Miss Indian America must be someone “dedicated to the cultural well-being of tribe, she must have a
comprehensive knowledge of her people and be dedicated to their advancement. She must have the appearance, personality and poise to represent her people in the white community." The winner of the pageant spent a year traveling around the United States speaking about her tribe and Native American issues.

The contestants were unmarried women between the ages of 16 and 25. They were asked to wear traditional costumes including headdresses and feathers even if these accessories were not part of contestant's tribal outfit and present a talent. Each contestant also gave a personal gift to her sponsor. Most of the judges were white throughout the pageant's history.


**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Shoshone

Miss America Pageant, Atlantic City, N.J. -- History.

Native Americans of North America

Yurok Indians -- Music.

Cheyenne Indians

Hupa Indians

Wyoming

Gros Ventre Indians (Montana)

Piegan Indians

Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

Nez Perce Indians -- History

Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, Oregon

Pawnee Indians

Crow Indians

Women.

Ute Indians

Navajo Indians -- Photographs.

Pueblo Indians -- Photographs.

Cayuse Indians

Kiowa Indians

Brayer, Herbert Oliver

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**box 1, folder 1**

**Correspondence of Dr. Herbert O. Brayer 1956**

**Scope and Contents**

Letters to and from Dr. Herbert O. Brayer and his involvement in the Miss Indian America pageant. He is listed as being an author, editor, publisher and judge at All-American Indian Days.

**box 1, folder 2**

**Pamphlets, photographs and brochures 1955- 1965**

**Scope and Contents**

Included in this folder: Malki museum brochure February 1965; The Record August 1955; September 1956 newspaper clipping; Miss Indian America pageant working schedule September 1954 and a “Shining Water Woman” postcard
Dr. Herbert O. Brayer's Notes and Writings 1956-1957

Scope and Contents

Information about Rita Ann McLaughlin, a dental technician from the Hunkpapa Sioux tribe who won the pageant in 1955 is in this folder. Brayer's writings is comprised mostly of information about All-American Indian Days which describes the event and lists the following tribes as being involved: Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Piegan, Yurok, Pawnee, Hupa, Nez Perce, Unmatilla, Cayuse, Warm Springs, Kiowa, Shoshone, Ute, Pueblo and Navajo.

Photographs 1954

Scope and Contents

Photographs of women in pageant at All-American Indian Days. Some of the photos are dated August 8, 1954. Also included is a one page article on Sandra Maey Gover, who was Miss Indian America IV in 1956.

Photographs undated

Scope and Contents

Included in this folder are the following photographs of women and events. Some additional photographs are unlabeled.

Vivian Old Horn- Crow; Rosalene Bull over the Hill- Crow; Myrma Mae Williams; Crow and Cheyenne girl dancers; Mary Gueva Whiteman- Crow; Jemez Eagle Dancer; Old Bull Cheyenne; Kettle dance; Caroline Rosemary Motanic- Umatilla (2 photos); Sandra Mae Gover (Miss Indian America IV)- Pawnee; Lucy Yellowmule “Dwells where the Corn Grows”- Corn tribe.

Photographs undated

Scope and Contents

Photographs of Miss Indian America Ceremony. Not all photographs are labeled. Most of the photographs are of tribal members standing on a stage and potentially crowning that year’s Miss Indian America. Includes the following photograph: Theodore Lost Star- Blackfeet Chief and Peter Red Horn Jr.

Photographs 1955

Scope and Contents

This folder includes the following photographs:

A wedding photo from April 10, 1955 of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Charles James. She is the former Miss Arlene Wesley and Miss Indian America of 1953. Also in the photograph is Rev. Malcolm Norment, a pastor at the Yakima Indian Christian Church in White Swan. Also included are the following photographs: A photo of Sandra Mae Gover. A photo of Glenn Emmons, Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. A photo of Maurice Petterson, director of the Koran Oriental band, Delores Jean McLaughlin, Queen of the Oriental band, Howar Leik, mayor of Casper and Harry Evans, Captain of the Guard at the Korean Temple. A photo of Miss Indian America runner up 1954-1955 including Wynema Rose Archambault, a Pawnee-Sioux tribes member from Pawnee, Oklahoma.
box 1, folder 8  Photographs 1954

Scope and Contents
Some of the photographs are dated August 8, 1954. Includes the following photographs:
A photo with the following women from left to right: Arlene Wesley, 1953 Miss Indian America, Yakima Tribe, dancer and singer; Etta Leona Connor, Umatilla tribe, Pendleton, Oregon; Mary A. Turley, Cherokee, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Mary Louise Defender, Miss Indian America II 1954-1955, Sioux; Miss Kay Price, Navajo, Sheep Springs, New Mexico; Tommie Bachand, Chippewa, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Clara Joy, Old Crow, Lodge Grass, Montana. A photo of Judge Zahn “Flying Cloud.” No. Sioux. A photo of Daniel Old Bull from Cheyenne. A signed photo of Woody Mercer made out to Herb. A photo of Miss Indian America III greeting Miss Indian America II. Arlene Wesley, 1953 Miss Indian America, Yakima Tribe, dancer and singer; Etta Leona Connor, Umatilla tribe, Pendleton, Oregon; Mary A. Turley, Cherokee, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Mary Louise Defender, Miss Indian America II 1954-1955, Sioux; Miss Kay Price, Navajo, Sheep Springs, New Mexico; Tommie Bachand, Chippewa, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Clara Joy, Old Crow, Lodge Grass, Montana. A photo of the following women: Arlene Wesley, Queen 1953, Mary Turley, Mary Lewis Defender, Queen 1954-1955, Kay Price, Wynema Rose Archambault.

box 1, folder 9  Correspondence and photographs 1954-1956

Scope and Contents
Photographs include Arapalo dancers, Judge H.B. Johnson and Sandra Mae Gover of the Pawnee tribe reciting the Lord’s Prayer in Sign Language with Clara White Hip of the Crow tribe singing and a group of portraits of contestants including Rose May Spencer which were mailed to Dr. Brayer at his address in Evanston, Illinois.
This folder includes a fact sheet which has information about Miss Indian America IV, Sandra Mae Gover dated August 1956. Also included is a letter about Gover’s potential tour of Shrine hospitals across the country to visit crippled children and how to get the media involved. Gover’s authority on Indian Sign Language as well as her beauty and education are also cited as reasons to promote her charity work on television and radio.
Also is a description of Mary Louise DeFender, a 23 year old Yanktonais Sioux Indian who won the title of Miss Indian America in 1954.

box 1, folder 10  Photographs undated

Scope and Contents
Includes photographs of the following people:
Joan Delphine Graves, Fairfax, Oklahoma, Osage-Pawnee, Sun-in-the Sky; Helen Sharon Miller, Serenade, Yakima Tribe, Wapato, Washington, 1952 Queen of the Yakima Tribe; Teresa Ambrose; Tommie Bachand, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Chippewa Tribe, Girl of the North; Susie Budd. Creek Indian, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Bailene de Sosa, Sioux; Wynena Rose Archambault.

box 1, folder 11  Photographs undated

Scope and Contents
Includes the following photographs:
Sandra Mae Gover of Pawnee, Miss Indian America IV; a Crow girl; a clipping from Spot News from Cleveland, Ohio dated November 20, 1955; Acey Blue Eagle-Pawnee; Mary Louise Defender poses for Ida Prokop Lee for Historic; N.D sculptured portrait Indian bust series (9th model); Rosa Mae Spencer and Nez Reid; Teresa Ambrose; Arapaho Dauer; Barbara Pappio, Kiowa Indian, Surgical nurse from Oklahoma City, 2nd place winner; Yakima group; Sandra Mae Gover, Pawnee, and Lula Real Rider, Pawnee; Group of Sioux; U.S. Judge Zahn “Flying Cloud” Northern Sioux; Sandra Mae Gover, Pawnee; Blackfoot dancers; Caroline Motanic of Pilot Rock, Oregon. August 1955; a photograph of Defender, McLaughlin, Archambault, Whilethum, de Sersa; Motanic Umatilla dancers.
box 1, folder 12  **Informational sheets on the American Indian undated**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes entries on Wigwam and Flathead Indians in Montana, the Pueblo of Arizona, the Hopi Indians of New Mexico, the Seminole of Florida and the Indians of Peru and Panama. Each card features information on housing, the roles of men, women and children and various rituals.

box 2, folder 1  **Newspaper Clippings 1956**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes Chicago Daily Tribune article from September 3, 1956 featuring a photo of Sandra Stuart, Miss Chicago and Sandra Mae Gover, Miss Indian America, on a train to the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City.

box 2, folder 2  **Photographs 1955**  
Scope and Contents  
Includes a photo of Miss Indian America contestant at the Miss America pageant of 1955. Also includes the following: A photo of Williams, Ambrose, de Sersa and Motanic on the Miss America stage. A photo of Arlene Wesley, 1953 Queen, Mary Turley, Mary Louise Defender, Queen 1954, Kay Price, Wynema Rose Archambault as the 1st Miss Indian America greets the new Miss Indian America and her court. A photo of Kay Price.

box 2, folder 3  **Photographs undated**  
Scope and Contents  
Contains the following photographs: Caroline Motanic, Umatilla; Jimmy Goes by the Door-Blackfeet dancers; Mary Geneva Whiteman- Crow; Darlene Desersa- Black Hills woman-Brule Sioux, Rapid City, South Dakota. Sponsor: Rapid City Shrine Club; Mary Louise Defender, Red Earth Woman, Sioux, North Dakota; Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Charles James on their wedding day. The bride is Arlene Wesley, Miss Indian America I; Arlene Wesley, Miss Indian America I, Yakima Indian, Washington. (Seated on a horse in costume. The following information is written on the back of the photo in pencil. 20 years old, 5’ 1 1/2 “, 100 lbs, costume weight: 40 lbs).

box 2, folder 4  **Photographs (contestant head shots and biographies) 1954-1955**  
Scope and Contents  
The following photographs are included: Caroline Rosemary Motanic. Tsa-Loo. Umatilla Tribe. Pilot Rock, Oregon. Winner American Beauty Contest 1952. Princess of Chief Joseph Days. The following head shots and biographies are also included: Theresa Anne Ambrose, Yakima; Myrna May Williams, Cayuse; Darlene Desersa, Rosebud Sioux; Wynema Rose Archambault, Pawness- Sioux; Ramona LaVau Mills, Sioux; Rosa Mae Margaret Spencer, Nez Perce; Sandra Ma Gover, Pawnee; Betty Jean Lunderman, Blackfeet; Roberta Jean Buck, Assiniboin; Jeannette Roselyn Weslye, Yakima; Barbara Louise Hudson, Osage; Hansa Fay Spang, Cheyenne.

All biographies include the contestant’s age, tribe, height, weight, famous ancestors, hobbies and education. Other photographs: Mary Louise Defender turning over her title to Rita Ann McLaughlin; Miss Indian America III (Rita Ann McLaughlin) and her court which includes Mary Louise Defender, Miss Indian America II, and 1955 runners up Wyema Rose Archambault, Mary Geneva Whiteman and Sandra Mae Gover; a photo of the finalists; a photo of the wives of the chiefs; Mary Louise Defender, Miss Indian America II, 1954; Arlene Josephine Wesley, Miss Indian America I, 1953; a photo of two Miss Americas: Lee Ann Meriweather, Miss America 1955 of California, poses with Rita Ann McLaughlin, Miss Indian America 1955; an advertisement for the “Miss (Indian) America Contest, 1955” and photos of the pageant dated August 8, 1954.
box 2, folder 5  
**Correspondence of Dr. Herbert O. Brayer 1949-1957**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Most of the correspondence is to or from Herbert O. Brayer and range from 1949 to 1957. Also undated copies of the contestant’s biographies are included.

box 2, folder 6  
**Clippings 1957**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Includes clippings of two different newspapers, the Phoenix Gazette and the Sheridan Press, which include articles about Delores Jean Short being crowned Miss Indian America in August 1957.

box 2, folder 7  
**Photographs undated**  
**Scope and Contents**  

box 2, folder 8  
**Photographs undated**  
**Scope and Contents**  
This folder contains the following photographs: Portraits of Rita McLaughlin; Wynema Archambault A photo of Joyce Elaine Arrowchief, Fort Duchesne, Utah. Ute tribe. Indians of South America map and information, National Geographic, 1982. 2 negatives of tribes members in traditional dress next to teepee. A photo of Mary Louise Defender, Miss Indian America II, Fort Yates, North Dakota in Sioux dress. A Certificate of Support of All American Indian Days issued to Dr. Herbert O. Brayer and Mrs. Garnet Brayer. All American Indians Days is defined on the certificate as “a human relations project, in which Indian and White Citizens cooperate- to build better Interracial Understanding- to Perpetuate Indian Legend, Arts and Crafts- to contribute to Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children and to promote the Preservation of our American Way of Life.”

box 3, folder 1  
**Entry forms 1955**  
**Scope and Contents**  
Entry forms for the Miss (Indian) American III pageant 1955. Contains the following contestants’ forms: Caroline Rosemary Motanic, Theresa Ann Ambrose, Wynema Rose Archambault, Sandra Mae Gover, Rosa Mae Margaret Spencer, Rita Ann McLaughlin, Mary Geneva Whiteman, Darlene Desersa, Myrna May Williams.
box 3, folder 2  **All American Indian Days 1955**
Scope and Contents
This folder includes a schedule of All American Indian Days August 6 and 7, 1955. Also includes official program, tickets to All American Indian Days and a general information brochure.

box 3, folder 3  **Correspondence 1954- 1955**
Scope and Contents

box 3, folder 4  **Judges' notes undated**
Scope and Contents
Includes judges’ notes on contestants. The judges made note of each contestant’s height, weight, tribe and age.

box 3, folder 5  **Postcards and correspondence 1948- 1957**
Scope and Contents
This folder includes Little Red Sky, an informational pamphlet for children about a Native American boy named Little Red Sky who visits the dentist from 1948. Also included are blank postcards of Hopi Indians and the correspondence of Herbert O. Brayer, January- February 1957.

box 3, folder 6  **Miss America pageant clippings and programs, 1954- 1956 1954- 1956**
Scope and Contents
Contains Miss America programs from 1954- 1956. Also clippings which depict local pageant coverage in 1954 and 1955 in Atlantic city.

box 3, folder 7  **All American Indian Days clippings and programs 1954- 1957**
Scope and Contents
This folder contains programs from All American Indian Days 1954- 1956 and a clipping about the event in the Sheridan Press.

box 3, folder 8  **Tourism brochures 1956- 1957**
Scope and Contents
Oklahoma, Tulsa and Wyoming tourist brochures.

box 3, folder 10  **Herbert O. Brayer papers 1945- 1984**
Scope and Contents
This folder contains the following: photos of Herbert O. Brayer, 1952; a letter to Dr. Ben M. Charrington, Director of the Social Science Foundation in 1945; undated poems; two copies of This Week in Chicago from February 195 and a program of Brayer's memorial service in 1984.

box 4, folder 1  **Judges' Papers 1955**
Scope and Contents
Papers of the judges during the Miss Indian America pageant in 1955. This includes a note from Wynema Archambault stating that she cannot fulfill the appointments and duties of Miss Indian America and asking to be placed secondly. Also included is a pair of tickets to the event. Extensive notes on the contestants’ names, tribal name, tribes, height, weight, talent and age from the judges are also in this folder.
The Sheridan Press clippings 1955-1957
Scope and Contents
Clippings from August 3 1955- August 1, 1957 which includes coverage of All American Indian Days.

Chicago Newspapers clippings 1955
Scope and Contents
Clippings covering Herbert Brayer’s involvement in the pageant and the contestants and their travels from the Chicago Sun Times and Chicago Tribune.

Atlantic City Newspaper clippings 1954-1957
Scope and Contents
Miss America Pageant coverage.

Miscellaneous newspaper clippings 1954-1957
Scope and Contents

Sheridan Press clippings 1956-1957
Scope and Contents
All American Indian Days coverage.

Sandra Mae Gover photograph undated
Scope and Contents
Undated photograph of Miss Indian America contestant, Sandra Mae Gover.

Federated Indian Tribal Singers Record undated
Scope and Contents
Record with “authentic American Indian songs”.

Randy Steffan prints undated
Scope and Contents
5 prints signed by Randy Steffen: teepee construction, men and horse competition, tribesmen singing and playing drums and spear throwing.

Holiday Magazine article 1956
Scope and Contents