Finding aid for the Concetta E. Ribaudo scrapbook on the Hollywood Canteen 7093

Bo Doub
USC Libraries Special Collections
2019 June
Doheny Memorial Library 206
3550 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, California 90089-0189
specol@usc.edu
URL: http://libraries.usc.edu/locations/special-collections
Abstract: The Concetta E. Ribaudo scrapbook on the Hollywood Canteen includes a variety of memorabilia collected by Ribaudo, who went by the stage name Connie Roberts, during her employment as a hostess at the Hollywood Canteen during World War II. The Hollywood Canteen was a converted barn that operated at 1451 Cahuenga Boulevard in Hollywood from October 3, 1942 to Thanksgiving Day 1945 as a club offering food, dancing, and entertainment for more than three million servicemen. A military uniform served as ticket for admission and everything at the canteen was free of charge. The collection includes Ribaudo’s nametag and identification card, letters she received from servicemen she met at the Canteen, news clippings, and various other forms of ephemera and memorabilia. One pilot who went by the name "Crash Clark" wrote to Ribaudo: "You are an OK kid in my books and I can not tell you just how much fun we had at the canteen. As for your jokes, they were the tops[...]."

Biographical / Historical
Concetta E. Ribaudo (stage name: Connie Roberts) is best known as the expert jitterbug witness called by the Canteen in 1944 after another hostess sued when she suffered a back injury during a tricky dance maneuver. The jitterbug dancing mishap was the subject of numerous press accounts. This collection includes a half dozen newspaper clippings of the trial and subsequent attention that Ribaudo received after she also took a spill on the dance floor. An article entitled "Now Connie Goes Boom" reported: "The blond jitterbug whose testimony in a $17,250 damage suit against Hollywood Canteen insisted that jiving need not be dangerous - took a spill herself last night at the Canteen. It was the same kind of accident that Florida Edwards claims to have suffered and for which she sued the Canteen in superior court." Edwards eventually won her lawsuit and received a settlement of $8,170.

Content Description
The collection consists of Concetta E. Ribaudo’s nametag and identification card, letters she received from servicemen she met at the Canteen, news clippings, and various other forms of ephemera and memorabilia that Ribaudo collected during her employment as a hostess at the Hollywood Canteen during World War II. A few of the newspaper clippings are photocopied, as well as some of the photographs, but most are originals. Typed captions, which provide some context to the material, were added by a previous owner.

Following is a list of ephemera included in the scrapbook:

1. A Paramount Pictures interview pass
2. A WAC broadside (8.5" x 11"): "Which of these jobs could you fill in the Army Air Forces"
3. A typed letter dated April 13, 1944 on Hollywood Canteen stationary addressed to "Dear Canteen Worker" from actress Bette Davis, the president of the Canteen, announcing new members of the management committee who will hear suggestions and complaints
4. Two issues of Hollywood Canteen Chatter, the unofficial, non-partisan newsletter (issues No. 12 and No. 6), both with creases and splits at folds
5. Song lyrics typed on a sheet of blue paper
6. A commendation to Roberts for her service to the Canteen featuring the printed signature of Bette Davis
7. Various Hollywood Canteen pieces, including Roberts official identification card, a coat check receipt, matchbook, napkin, nametag, and arm band
8. Various other items, including a piece of tissue imprinted with a picture of Hitler ("Wipe our Hitler"), and a USO button and volunteer card for Connie Roberts
9. A few items listing Ribaudo’s real name, including a War Ration book and stamps, and a newspaper clipping of a Los Angeles Examiner article from 1938 showing "Concetta Ribaudo " who is described as a "prodigy" opera singer
10. A variety of souvenir photographs of Roberts with servicemen and friends at various nightclubs around Hollywood, including the Coconut Grove, Hofbrau Garden, and The Tropics
11. A selection of signed photographs from servicemen and celebrities of the day.
Conditions Governing Access
Advance notice required for access.

Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Manuscripts Librarian. Permission for publication is given on behalf of Special Collections as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained.

Preferred Citation
[Box/folder no. or item name], Concetta E. Ribaudo scrapbook on the Hollywood Canteen, Collection no. 7093, Regional History Collection, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Purchased from Johnson Rare Books and Archives, May 13, 2019.

Processing Information
The materials in this collection were previously housed within plastic sleeves and collected in a modern three-ring binder. Several of the items had been tacked to sheets of white paper. During processing, the items were transferred from the three-ring binder to acid-free folders, with the arrangement within the plastic sleeves preserved.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
World War, 1939-1945 -- California -- Archival resources
World War, 1939-1945 -- Personal narratives
World War, 1939-1945 -- Photographs
World War, 1939-1945 -- War work -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources
World War, 1939-1945 -- Women -- California -- Los Angeles -- Archival resources
Memorabilia
Scrapbooks
Hollywood Canteen -- Archives
Ribaudo, Concetta E. -- Archives