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Oscar and Alice Simonson Papers

Finding Aid

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections
Briggs Library (SBL) Room 241 Box 2114
1300 North Campus Drive
Brookings, SD 57007
Phone: 605-688-5094
Email: arcrefs@sdstate.edu

Collection Summary

Identifier

MA 75

Title

Oscar and Alice Simonson Papers

Creator

Oscar and Alice Simonson

Dates

1941-1979

Extent

0.63 linear feet (1 document case and 1 small document case),
photographs, sound recording

Language

English

Repository

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M.
Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

Access note

This collection is open to researchers without restrictions. The materials in the Archives do not circulate and may be used in-house only.

Preferred Citation

Name of item. Oscar and Alice Simonson Papers. MA 75. South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

Abstract

Oscar E. Simonson (1913-2014) and Alice Margaret Bakken (1918-) were married on June 11, 1938. They made their home and farmed in the Bristol, South Dakota area for forty years, planting their first crops in the spring of 1939. The collection consists of "Farm Family Record Books" compiled by Alice and Oscar Simonson from June 1, 1941 through December 31, 1979 for their farm in Day County, SD. In these workbooks, issued by the US Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration, farmers recorded monthly all money taken in and paid out, as well as farm-furnished food, an annual summary, and a five year inventory. The workbooks provide details of a family farm during the mid-twentieth century. The collection also includes some images of the family and an oral history interview conducted with Alice Simonson in 2016.

Biographical Note

Oscar E. Simonson was born on August 14, 1913, at Bristol, South Dakota to Simon and Annie (Skudal) Simonson. He attended country school in Union Township, Day County and Bristol High School. After his education, he farmed with his family near Bristol. In the 1930's, Oscar worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps, in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Alice Margaret Bakken was born in McGregor, North Dakota on January 4th, 1918, to Elmer and Inga Marie (Sand) Bakken. She grew up in rural northeastern South Dakota's Day County. On June 11, 1938, Alice married Oscar.

Oscar and Alice Simonson made their home and farmed in Day County for forty years. They planted their first crops in the spring of 1939. Over those forty years, the Simonson's witnessed many advancements in agriculture and technology of rural America including the switch from horses to tractors, crop hybridization, the introduction of electricity in the home, and indoor plumbing. The Simonson's rotated crops, planted tree belts, practiced diversified farming, and saved seed from the previous year's crops to plant the next year. Alice kept the books for the family farm.

In 1957, they purchased from Alice's father, Elmer Bakken, the 1890 homestead of Lars A. Sand in Union Township, Day County, South Dakota. Oscar and Alice lived on the Sand homestead until they sold the farm in 1978 and moved to

Webster, South Dakota. Oscar and Alice also acquired his parent's Union County farm, which his parents had acquired from his grandfather, Ole Simonson, which had been originally homesteaded by Alma Smoots.

While living in Webster, Oscar worked at the Farmers Elevator in Holmquist, South Dakota for ten years. Alice was on the board of Sun Dial Manor in Bristol, when it was being organized and built; Oscar was a board member in 1980's. Oscar and Alice thoroughly enjoyed traveling by plane and bus. They traveled to Norway to visit Oscar's mother's birthplace.

Oscar Simonson died on March 5, 2014 at Bethesda Home in Webster. Oscar and Alice had two children, Linda born in 1940, and Robert born in 1944.

Arrangement

The bulk of the collection is arranged in chronological order.

Contents Note

The collection consists of completed "Farm Family Record Books" compiled by Alice and Oscar Simonson from June 1, 1941 thru December 31, 1979 for their farm in Day County, South Dakota. In these workbooks, issued by the US Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration, farmers recorded monthly all money taken in and paid out, as well as farm-furnished food, an annual summary, and a five year inventory. Alice made detailed entries in the farm ledgers. She accounted for all incomes and expenses for their farm; everything was noted down to every nail purchased.

The collection also includes information about the Simonson family, images of the family and farm, and an oral history interview conducted with Alice Simonson in 2016.

Related Resources

Atlas: Day County, South Dakota, 1968.

South Dakota Collection: Oversize G1448.D3 A74 1968

Atlas of Day County, South Dakota: containing plats of each township, a county road map, a rural directory of farmers, and other features, 1952.

South Dakota Collection: Oversize G1448.D3 A74 1952

Bakken family history, Day County, South Dakota by Douglas A. Bakken and Jacquelyn Bakken, 2013.

South Dakota Collection CS71 .B165 2013

Day County history, 1981.
South Dakota Collection: F657.D3 D39

Key Words

Agriculture -- South Dakota
Day County (S.D.)
Family farms -- South Dakota
Farm life -- South Dakota
Farm record keeping
Farm record book
Simonson, Alice Margaret Bakken
Simonson, Oscar E.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Arranged and Described by

Ann Eichinger

Container List

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	Farm Family Record Book	1941
1	2	Farm Family Record Book	1942
1	3	Farm Family Record Book	1943
1	4	Farm Family Record Book	1944
1	5	Farm Family Record Book	1945
1	6	Farm Family Record Book	1946
1	7	Farm Family Record Book	1947
1	8	Farm Family Record Book	1948
1	9	Farm Family Record Book	1949
1	10	Farm Family Record Book	1950
1	11	Farm Family Record Book	1951
1	12	Farm Family Record Book	1952
1	13	Farm Family Record Book	1953
1	14	Farm Family Record Book	1954
1	15	Farm Family Record Book	1955
1	16	Farm Family Record Book	1956
1	17	Farm Family Record Book	1957
1	18	Farm Family Record Book	1958
1	19	Farm Family Record Book	1959
1	20	Farm Family Record Book	1960
1	21	Farm Family Record Book	1961
1	22	Farm Family Record Book	1962
1	23	Farm Family Record Book	1963
1	24	Farm Family Record Book	1964
1	25	Farm Family Record Book	1965
1	26	Farm Family Record Book	1966
1	27	Farm Family Record Book	1967
2	1	Farm Family Record Book	1968
2	2	Farm Family Record Book	1969
2	3	Farm Family Record Book	1970
2	4	Farm Family Record Book	1971
2	5	Farm Family Record Book	1972
2	6	Farm Family Record Book	1973
2	7	Farm Family Record Book	1974
2	8	Farm Family Record Book	1975
2	9	Farm Family Record Book	1976
2	10	Farm Family Record Book	1977
2	11	Farm Family Record Book	1978

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
2	12	Farm Family Record Book	1979
2	13	Biographical information about Alice and Oscar Simonson	2014-2016
2	14	Images of Simonson family and farm	undated
2	15	Oral history interview (audio recording)	2016
2	16	Letter from Alice Simonson to her children about the 1930s	1995