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Mary W. Lauman Papers

1944-1945

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Mary W. Lauman, a 1937 graduate of Cornell University, served in the United States Marine Corps from March 1944 through December 1945. During her 10 months of active duty, Mary wrote numerous letters to her mother detailing her everyday life from boot camp in Lejeune, North Carolina, to her work with the United States Army Personnel Department. These letters contain interesting insights into the life of a woman Marine during World War II, including behavior, dress, and social interactions.

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Background on Mary W. Lauman

Mary W. Lauman was born circa 1915 and grew up in the city of Ithaca, New York. Her father, George N. Lauman, taught rural sociology at Cornell University for many years, and with many other relatives associated with the University, Mary naturally followed when she came of age, entering with the class of 1937.

During the Second World War, Mary enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving from March 1944 through December 1945. A hard worker, she earned the title of company "Honor Girl" during boot camp at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and during ten months of service, she worked for the Army Personnel Department in Arlington, Va. Maze, as she was known to her close friends and family, appears to have been a caring, fun-loving young woman, always willing to lend a hand or join a game of bridge. After the war, she married John Progue Wheeler. She died in 2003.

Scope of collection

The Lauman collection contains twenty-three letters written by Mary W. Lauman to her mother Frances, while serving in the Marine Corps. The letters range in date from March to September 1944, and from October to December 1945. The collection also contains a single letter written by Mary's cousin, Hilda Berry, to Frances Lauman.

The early letters in the collection (March-May 1944) detail Mary's basic training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and the later letters (June 1944-December 1945) discuss her daily life as a woman Marine working at the U.S. Army Personnel Department in Arlington, Virginia. The former group of letters offers insight into how women marines were expected to behave and interact with male Marines while on base, while the second group describes the actions and behavior of women serving in a less restrictive office environment. Throughout her letters, Mary refers to various, traditional roles of women in the 1940s: hostess, date, girlfriend, and even mother. Taken as a whole, her letters offer an interesting first-hand glimpse into the world of women serving in the military during World War II.

Inventory

Berry, Hilda T.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Apr 5

Box 1: 1

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Mar 23

Box 1: 2

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Mar 27

Box 1: 3

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Mar 27

Box 1: 4

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Mar 27

Box 1: 5

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Apr 12

Box 1: 6

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Apr 16

Box 1: 7

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 Apr 23

Box 1: 8

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 May 7

Box 1: 9

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 May 11

Box 1: 10

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 May 25

Box 1: 11

Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances

1944 June 5
Box 1: 12
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1944 July 16
Box 1: 13
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1944 July 16
Box 1: 14
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1944 Sept 6
Box 1: 15
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1944 Sept 30
Box 1: 16
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1944 Sept 30
Box 1: 17
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1945 Oct 18
Box 1: 18
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1945 Oct 25
Box 1: 19
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1945 Nov 2
Box 1: 20
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1945 Nov 9
Box 1: 21
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1945 Nov 23
Box 1: 22
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1945 Dec 3
Box 1: 23
Lauman, Mary W.: Letter to Lauman, Frances
1945 Dec 3
Box 1: 24

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Donated by Robert S. Cox in December 2007.

Processing Information

Processed by Rachael Avery, February 2008.

Related Material

For other personal accounts of service during World War II in the Special Collections and University Archives, see:

William Manchester Papers (MS 433)

Wayne G. Sharpe Papers (MS 462)

G. Clifford Stamper Papers (MS 463)

Robert and Waldemar Schultze Papers (MS 528)

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

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Search terms

Subjects

Camp Lejeune (N.C.)

Lauman, Mary W.

Women marines.

World War, 1939-1945--Women.

Contributors

Lauman, Mary W. [main entry]

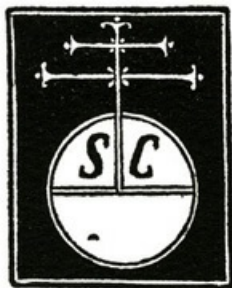
Genres and formats

Letters (Correspondence).

Link to similar SCUA collections

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World War II



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