



Guide to the Annalee Davis Thorndike Photograph Collection, 1902-1999, bulk 1915-1940

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:

Annalee Davis Thorndike Photograph Collection, 1902-1999, bulk 1915-1940

Repository:

New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6688
<http://www.nhhistory.org/>

Collection Number:

2004.024

Author of Finding Aid:

Jack Helie; edited and updated by Sandra L. Wheeler

Creator:

Thorndike, Annalee Davis, 1915-2002

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:

1 box and 1 volume ; 0.46 linear feet

Abstract:

Photographs in this collection are of Annalee Davis Thorndike, her family, and locations in Concord and Meredith, New Hampshire. They are black and white images on album pages. Most are identified and dated. There are no photographs of the dolls she created, of the manufacturing facility, or of the workers.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

The Annalee Davis Thorndike Photograph Collection was given to the New Hampshire Historical Society by Annalee Davis Thorndike on December 28, 2000.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by an unknown person at an unknown date and refined by Sandra L. Wheeler in July 2022. The finding aid was written by Jack Helie in 2010, and edited and updated by Sandra L. Wheeler in July 2022. This finding aid follows the standards set forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The majority of materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use. The audio cassette tapes require a cassette player for use.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

Preferred Citation:

Item title, Annalee Davis Thorndike Photograph Collection, 2004.024. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

Collection Overview

Biographical Information:

Barbara Annalee Davis (1915-2002) was born in Concord, NH, to Emerson Davis (1890-1926) and Doris Ladd (1890-1972). As a child, she made marionettes and later dolls for display, with sewn-on clothing and in set positions. In the Depression years of the 1930s, she sold them through what was then known as the New Hampshire League of Arts and Crafts (later the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen), and in department stores in Boston.

On April 19, 1941, she married Charles “Chip” Thorndike (1914-2008), a chicken farmer in Meredith, NH. By the 1950s, the poultry farm was no longer profitable and she increased production of her dolls, incorporating the Annalee Mobilitee Dolls company in 1955 with her husband.

Chip Thorndike created wire armatures that permitted the dolls to be posed and made small wood accessories to accompany them (skis, little boats, etc.). The dolls became promotional items for tourism and were popular as themed collectibles. To increase production, the couple created a factory in Meredith, which at its peak covered 14 acres of land with 7 buildings and over 300 employees.

The market for the dolls declined in the 1990s, and manufacture of the dolls and accessories was outsourced to Hong Kong, though design and marketing operations remained in Meredith. The business had been given to Annalee and Chip Thorndike's sons, Townsend and Charles (Chuck), but after lawsuits between them, the business and Meredith property were sold in 2008. At the time of writing this finding aid (2022), Annalee Dolls continue to be made in Hong Kong.

Collection Scope and Content Note:

The Annalee Davis Thorndike Photograph Collection consists of photograph albums containing family images, with pictures of Thorndike's children and relatives. Another album contains images of Thorndike's mother, Doris (Ladd) Davis, and her friends and life at Dana Hall School (Wellesley, MA), 1909-1911.

A baby book of Annalee Davis Thorndike kept by her mother between 1915 and 1918 provides information about the life of a young child in early 20th-century New Hampshire. It contains accounts of the baby's development and activities along with numerous photos, greeting cards, and some locks of hair. For example, there is a description of her first birthday party, with photos of the one-year-old guests, their mothers, and a list of gifts.

There are 5 audio cassette tapes of conversations with Thorndike, perhaps from the exhibit of her dolls at the New Hampshire Historical Society in 1999.

There are no photographs of Annalee Dolls; the manufacturing facility in Meredith, NH; workers; or offices.

Arrangement:

The photographs were in albums, some of which were unbound and without covers. The pages are arranged chronologically as much as possible, though many are undated. The Baby Book pages are in order as found.

Contents List

Volume 1 Album, 1909-1911
 Doris (Ladd) Davis' (Annalee Davis Thorndike's mother) photographs of grounds and activities at Dana Hall School

Box 1

Folder 1 Album, 1902-1910
Folder 2 Album, 1905-1907, undated
Folder 3 Album pages, 1912-1913
Folder 4 Album pages, 1927

- Folder 5 Album pages, 1928-1931
- Folder 6 Album pages, 1937-1948
- Folder 7 Album pages, 1960-1966
- Folder 8 Album pages, undated
- Folder 9 Baby Book pages 1-19, 1915-1916
- Folder 10 Baby Book pages 20-39, 1916-1917
- Folder 11 Baby Book pages 40-59, 1915-1919
- Folder 12 Baby Book pages 60-80, 1915-1916
- Folder 13 Baby Book pages 81-94, 1915-1918
- Folder 14 Baby Book covers
- Folder 15 Audio cassette tape "Session 1," 1999
- Folder 16 Audio cassette tape "Session 2.1," 1999
- Folder 17 Audio cassette tape "Session 2.2," 1999
- Folder 18 Audio cassette tape "Session 3.1," 1999
- Folder 19 Audio cassette tape "Session 3.2," 1999

Subject Terms

People:

- Davis, Doris, 1890-1972
- Thorndike, Annalee Davis, 1915-2002

Organizations:

- Dana Hall School

Subjects:

- Baby books
- Infants
- Photography
- School sports
- Sports

Locations:

- Concord, NH
- Wellesley, MA

Related Materials

Archives

Ephemera Collection - Meredith:

- Museum and gift shop brochure, 1985, 2015.537
- Doll museum, 1991, 2015.532

Library

Annalee Mobilitee Dolls, Inc. *Catalog*. Meredith, N.H.: Annalee Mobilitee Dolls, Inc., 1980-1998. Call number: 745.59 T499cat

Annalee Mobilitee Dolls, Inc. *The Collector*. Meredith, N.H.: Annalee Mobilitee Dolls, Inc., 1989-1998. Call number: 745.59 T499col

Illustrated Price Index and Collector's Information Guide to Annalee Mobilitie Dolls, Inc., Volume II, Animals. Meredith, N.H.: Whiteface Publishing Co., 1989. Call number: 745.59 T499pi

Thorndike, Annalee Davis. *Annalee : '34-'84 : catalog of gifts.* Meredith, N.H.: Annalee's Giftshop, 1984. Call number: 745.59 T499a

Museum

The New Hampshire Historical Society museum has over a hundred Annalee dolls, Annalee doll accessories, and furniture owned by Annalee. See call number 1999.040.