



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Ivory Soap Essay Contest Collection

NMAH.AC.0818

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2008

Archives Center, National Museum of American History

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents note.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Biographical/Historical note.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Ivory Soap Essay Contest Collection
Date:	1940.
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0818
Creator:	Nixon, Helen Ellis, Winifred
Extent:	9 Items
Language:	English .
Summary:	Documents saved by the winner of an essay contest, including: two congratulatory telegrams, two letters, three photographs of the winner with the car she won, an article, and an owner identification card from the car dealer.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was donated by Helen Nixon's niece, Winifred N. Ellis, 2002.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center

Ivory Soap Advertising Collection, NMAH.AC.0791

Warshaw Collection of Business Americana, NMAH.AC.0060

Processing Information

Processed by Kiley Orchard (intern), 2008; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Ivory Soap Essay Contest Collection, 1940, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for research and access on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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Biographical Note

Helen Nixon, a dietician at Wichita General Hospital in Wichita Falls, Texas, was the winner of a nationwide essay contest sponsored by the Proctor & Gamble Company in 1940. Contestants were asked to finish the statement, "I like Ivory Soap because..." in twenty-five words or less. Nixon's award-winning essay expounded upon the soap's "general utilitarian value...which meant more convenience and greater economy in every household," according to an article about her in The Bulletin of Texas Dietetic Association. Her prizes included a Buick Eight Sedan, one thousand gallons of Texaco gasoline, and a fifty dollar certificate for automobile accessories.

Scope and Contents

Collection consists of documents about Helen Nixon's award-winning essay in the 1940 Ivory Soap contest, including a telegram and letter from Proctor & Gamble notifying her that she had won, a similar letter from Texaco, three photographs taken when she received the keys to her new Buick, and an owner's identification card for the car.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Contests
- Soap

Types of Materials:

- Articles
- Letters (correspondence) -- 1900-1950
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 1940-1950

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Ivory soap 1940 essay materials, 1940
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