

J S Battye Library of West Australian History Private Archives – Collection Listing

MN 2212
Acc. 6003A

NELSON, Mabel Anna

Born in Geraldton in 1907, Mabel was the eldest daughter of Julius Johannes Neilsen-Nissen (a Danish fisherman, who changed his name to Charles Julius Nelson during WWI years) and Mabel Jane. Mabel Jane was the daughter of the legendary “Diver” Thomas Hearn, who was famous for his part in the rescue of Madesto Varischetti in 1907 when he was trapped by waters in a mine shaft at the “Bonnievale Mine” near Coolgardie.

Mabel Anna had a long and distinguished career as a pianist and was the first ever to win the music scholarship at the University of WA. She studied at the Conservatorium in Melbourne where she was awarded a degree of Bachelor of Music at the University of Melbourne.

She went to Japan in 1946 and later to Korea in 1951 playing for Gladys Moncrieff, who was sent to entertain the troops after WWII and during the Korean War. She also accompanied Strella Wilson on tours. She worked at the ABC for many years and then for radio station 3DB where she hosted the Swallow’s Juniors, a radio programme that was the start of the careers of many of today’s television celebrities.

One of the highlights of her career was playing for an unknown talent, Joan Sutherland, when she won the final of the Mobile Quest in 1951, which was the start of her career.

She married Gordon Hill, a Melbourne lawyer in 1933. Several years after his death she returned to her home state to be close to her only surviving sister and her family. Mabel Anna Nelson died in Perth in 1987.

The Papers

The papers were donated to the Battye Library by Dana Shave on 22 April 2003 (Acc 6003A).

Holdings = 0.30m

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Summary of Classes

DIARIES
NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS
PHOTOGRAPHS
PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS
SCRAPBOOKS

- | | | |
|---------|---|-------------|
| 6003A/1 | DIARIES
1946
Tour of Japan | |
| 6003A/2 | 1951
Tour of Korea | |
| 6003A/3 | NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS
1953
Tour of New Zealand includes newspaper
cuttings and photographs | |
| 6003A/5 | 1922-1951
Various newspaper cuttings – also book | Photocopies |
| 6003A/4 | PHOTOGRAPHS
n.d.
Mabel Nelson aged 5 months]
Mabel Nelson aged about 3 years]
Mabel Nelson accompanist | |
| 6003A/6 | PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS
1926->
Includes photographs, newspaper clippings,
marriage certificate, publicity material etc | |
| 6003A/7 | SCRAPBOOKS
n.d.
Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings | |

2nd September 2003