

From her mid-teenage years well into old age, [Olive Goodykoontz](#) kept a series of [diaries](#) chronicling almost every single day of her life. Her mother, [Myrtle](#), had kept a daily diary when she was younger doing missionary work in Mexico. As a small child, Olive read the journal and wrote letters to her mother that she tucked inside it. Over time, Myrtle and possibly also Olive tucked several odds and ends into the journal (such as letters and photos), using it as a family history repository. Myrtle even wrote a partial family tree inside.

When Olive was a teenager, Myrtle gave Olive her very first journal and encouraged her to write in it every day. Initially, she was lax in her journaling, but over the years she became so prolific that almost every single day had at least a couple sentences of an entry. She recorded everything from vacations to which days she did the wash.

However, Olive didn't just use pre-printed journals or diaries for her writing. Often, she would take whatever notebook or day planner was available (such as a leftover speller from a class she was teaching) and use that as her journal until it was filled up. As a result, the collection of Olive's journals all together looks like a hodge podge of various sizes and styles. She had daily journals and sometimes [prayer journals](#), as well. As she got older, she began to type more using the typewriter issued to her by [the AFSC](#). Eventually she began to keep a handwritten daily journal and a typed daily journal both, the latter with more information on work and the former with more personal reflection.

Just like her mother, Olive occasionally placed loose or taped down items inside of her journals as additional record. While she didn't keep every ticket or brochure or material, there are examples of all of these within her writings. Trolley tickets from her first trip to California, vaccination records from Germany, and copies of her AFSC business card are examples of the items she kept.

Keeping a journal wasn't all personal reflection for Olive. It also helped her hone and improve her writing skills over time. Her earliest diaries from high school and college have a lot of writing errors and one can see that her writing style isn't established yet. As time goes on, there are fewer errors and her writing becomes tighter and more distinctive. Olive's writing skills were often her most valuable asset and a contributing factor to her promotions while at the AFSC. Even when she wasn't a section leader, Olive was often the one tasked with writing reports because she was the best writer and so well read.

*Olive's journals are currently being transcribed in their entirety and can be viewed in .pdf format [here](#).*