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# Lonita Gustad Corothers Papers

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# Lonita Gustad Corothers Papers

## Finding Aid

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections  
Briggs Library (SBL) Room 241 Box 2114  
1300 North Campus Drive  
Brookings, SD 57007  
Phone: 605-688-5094  
Email: [arcrefs@sdstate.edu](mailto:arcrefs@sdstate.edu)

## Collection Summary

### *Identifier*

MA 48

### *Title*

Lonita Gustad Corothers Papers

### *Creator*

Lonita Gustad Corothers

### *Dates*

1942-2010

### *Extent*

6.0 linear feet -- 6 records center boxes

### *Language*

English

### *Repository*

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

### *Access note*

This collection is open to researchers without restrictions. The materials in the Archives do not circulate and may be used in-house only.

### *Preferred Citation*

*Name of item.* Lonita Gustad Corothers Papers. MA 48. South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

### *Abstract*

Lonita Gustad Corothers was a student in the Division of Pharmacy at South Dakota State College starting in September of 1946 and graduating in the spring of 1950. Her graduating class was comprised of eight women and 56 men. Her minor was in chemistry. She began keeping a diary in 1945 when she was 17 years old and realized that she was "living in momentous times." The collection is composed of her diaries from 1946 through 2010, excerpts from and a timeline index of the diaries, correspondence with Tom Corothers written primarily during their courtship, a grief notebook written after her husband died, and her original writings and poetry.

## **Biographical Note**

Lonita Joyce Gustad was born on May 19, 1928 in Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton, South Dakota. She lived on a farm near Volin, South Dakota with her parents and a younger sister, Roberta, nicknamed Bobby. Lonita was 17 years old in 1945 when she began keeping a diary. World War II was ending and the second atomic bomb was detonated in Nagasaki, Japan when she realized that she was living in momentous times, but that in time the details would be forgotten.

She graduated from Yankton High School in May of 1946 and began her college education at South Dakota State College in September of the same year, graduating with a degree in pharmacy on June 5, 1950. Her pharmacy class of 1950 was comprised of eight women and 56 men. Her minor was in chemistry, a field that was also predominantly male at the time. Following graduation, she worked at Woodward Pharmacy in Aberdeen, South Dakota for a year. She then moved to Sioux City, Iowa where she worked and lived until the time that she donated her papers to South Dakota State University.

She met Thomas Edward Corothers during her time at college, whom she married on June 24, 1951. The couple had one child, a son named John born on August 3, 1952 who was killed in a motorcycle accident in Honolulu, Hawaii on July 25, 1972. Her husband died on March 1, 1998 at the age of 71.

## Arrangement

This collection is organized into seven series:

Series 1. Timelines

Series 2. Diaries

Series 3. Correspondence

Series 4. Poetry

Series 5. Original Writings

Series 6. Diary Excerpts

Sub-series 1. 1949 Diary

Sub-series 2. 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage

Sub-series 3. 1955-1973 Marriage and Family

Series 7. General.

Within each series, items are arranged chronologically, with the exception of Series 6 which is arranged alphabetically.

## Contents Note

Composed of Lonita Gustad Corothers' diaries from 1946 through 2010, excerpts from and a timeline index of the diaries, correspondence with Tom Corothers written primarily during their courtship, a grief notebook written after her husband died, and her original writings and poetry. Of note are the daily descriptions of her experiences as a student at South Dakota State College from 1946 to 1950.

### *Series 1. Timelines.*

Composed of notebooks containing timeline indexes with brief accounts of diary entries from 1945 through 2010. The index was compiled by Lonita Gustad Corothers to easily finding specific dates and accounts. Starred entries indicate more important life events.

### *Series 2. Diaries.*

Composed of diaries from August of 1945 through June 2010. Of note are the early diaries which mention events of World War II and the author's years as a pharmacy student at South Dakota State College from 1946 to 1950.

### *Series 3. Correspondence.*

Comprised of letters exchanged between Tom Corothers and Lonita Gustad dated from 1949-1964 during their courtship and early marriage. The bulk of the letters were exchanged before their marriage, from 1949 to 1951.

### *Series 4. Poetry.*

Comprised of poetry written and arranged by Lonita Corothers. The manuscript was compiled in 2003 out of poems written throughout her adult life. The manuscript was received in five 3-ring binders: 1: Nature, Faith; 2: Love, Anger, Humor; 3: Death, Grief; 4: Philosophy; 5: Age, Miscellaneous.

### *Series 5. Original Writings.*

Comprised of original writing by Lonita Corothers, both poetry and prose. Most, if not all, of these pieces were copied by the author and appear elsewhere in the collection. The writings were collected in envelopes and appear to have been placed in the envelopes by the author as they were copied. They do not appear to have been gathered in any order (chronological or subject) that could be ascertained. They are written on various types of scrap paper, such as discarded letters, envelopes, grocery lists, or church bulletins. The writing is rarely dated, however an approximate date would sometimes be indicated by the scrap paper.

### *Series 6. Diary Excerpts.*

This series contains printed copies of diary entries, with comments occasionally added by the author as she transcribed the entries. The comments added later are usually inside double parentheses.

#### *Sub-series: 1949 Diary.*

Comprised of copies of diary entries for 1949, which the author felt was the best year of her life. It describes her experiences in college for the spring semester of her junior year and the fall semester of her senior year in college, as well as time spent at home during vacations.

#### *Sub-series 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage.*

Dated from 1949 through 1955, in which the author pulls excerpts from her diaries primarily pertaining to her courtship of and early years of marriage to Tom Corothers. Of note: a description of life on campus during the postwar era was added by the author at the time

of transcription on the first page of the excerpts on courtship and marriage.

*Sub-series 1955-1973 Marriage and Family.*

Primarily full text transcriptions of diary entries dated from 1955 through 1973. Of note is the tragic death of the author's only child, John, on July 25, 1972.

*Series 7. General.*

Contains general materials dated from 1943 through 2010, including writing and personal reflections and correspondence with South Dakota State University President Peggy Gordon Miller primarily regarding the transfer of the author's papers. Of note is a Grief Notebook, written during the four years following the death of the author's husband.

## **Key Words**

Corothers, John

Corothers, Lonita Gustad, 1928-

Corothers, Thomas E.

Diaries

Poetry

South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Division of Pharmacy

## **Administrative Information**

### *Conditions Governing Access*

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### *Arranged and Described by*

Ruby R. Wilson, 2012 February 7.

Additions made by Crystal J. Gamradt, Archivist on 2017 October 27

## **Container List**

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
1. Timelines	1	1	Timeline Index 1: 1945 August 29 to 1950 May 19	1945-1950
1. Timelines	1	2	Timeline Index 2: 1950 May 20 to 1962 March 2	1950-1962
1. Timelines	1	3	Timeline Index 3: 1962 February 28 to 1971 May 8	1962-1971
1. Timelines	1	4	Timeline Index 4: 1971 May 10 to 1979 February 3	1971-1979
1. Timelines	1	5	Timeline Index 5: 1979 January 29 to 1992 October 31	1979-1992
1. Timelines	1	6	Timeline Index 6: 1992 November 1 to 2008 February 19	1992-2008
1. Timelines	1	7	Timeline Index 7: 2008 February 21 to 2010 May 23	2008-2010
2. Diaries	1	8	Diary 1: 1945 August 9 to November 29	1945
2. Diaries	1	9	Diary 2: 1945 December 1 to 1946 July 23	1945-1946
2. Diaries	1	10	Diary 3: 1946 July 24 to December 31	1946
2. Diaries	1	11	Diary 4: 1947 January 1 to 1948 January 4	1947-1948

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
2. Diaries	1	12	Diary 5: 1948 January 5 to December 3	1948
2. Diaries	1	13	Diary 6: 1948 December 4 to 1949 May 6	1948-1949
2. Diaries	1	14	Diary 7: 1949 May 7 to June 6	1949
2. Diaries	1	15	Diary 8: 1949 June 7 to October 27	1949
2. Diaries	1	16	Diary 9: 1949 October 28 to 1950 February 17	1949-1950
2. Diaries	1	17	Diary 10: 1950 February 18 to September 26	1950
2. Diaries	1	18	Diary 11: 1950 September 27 to 1952 August 1	1950-1952
2. Diaries	1	19	Diary 12: 1952 August 2 to 1953 October 22	1952-1953
2. Diaries	1	20	Diary 13: 1953 October 23 to 1957 May 28	1953-1957
2. Diaries	2	1	Diary 14: 1957 May 29 to 1959 November 12	1957-1959
2. Diaries	2	2	Diary 15: 1959 November 13 to 1962 July 5	1959-1962
2. Diaries	2	3	Diary 16: 1962 July 6 to 1964 September 25	1962-1964
2. Diaries	2	4	Diary 17: 1964 September 25 to 1967 March 18	1964-1967
2. Diaries	2	5	Diary 18: 1967 March 19 to 1970 August 26	1967-1970
2. Diaries	2	6	Diary 19: 1970 August 27 to 1973 January 23	1970-1973
2. Diaries	2	7	Diary 20: 1973 January 23 to 1974 December 7	1973-1974
2. Diaries	2	8	Diary 21: 1974 December 7 to 1976 July 5	1974-1976
2. Diaries	3	1	Diary 22: 1976 July 6 to 1978 April 6	1976-1978
2. Diaries	3	2	Diary 23: 1978 April 8 to 1980 March 31	1978-1980
2. Diaries	3	3	Diary 24: 1980 April 1 to 1982 December 24	1980-1982
2. Diaries	3	4	Diary 25: 1982 December 24 to 1986 December 31	1982-1986
2. Diaries	3	5	Diary 26: 1987 January 1 to 1990 July 29	1987-1990



<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
2. Diaries	3	6	Diary 27: 1990 July 30 to 1993 September 18	1990-1993
2. Diaries	3	7	Diary 28: 1993 September 19 to 1995 March 10	1993-1995
2. Diaries	3	8	Diary 29: 1995 March 11 to 1996 August 31	1995-1996
2. Diaries	3	9	Diary 30: 1996 August 31 to 1997 December 1	1996-1997
2. Diaries	3	10	Diary 31: 1997 December 1 to 1998 May 1	1997-1998
2. Diaries	3	11	Diary 32: 1998 May 1 to 1999 December 31	1998-1999
2. Diaries	4	1	Diary 33: 2000 January 1 to 2001 September 1	2000-2001
2. Diaries	4	2	Diary 34: 2001 September 1 to 2004 February 8	2001-2004
2. Diaries	4	3	Diary 35: 2004 February 8 to 2006 November 30	2004-2006
2. Diaries	4	4	Diary 36: 2006 December 1 to 2008 September 1	2006-2008
2. Diaries	4	5	Diary 37: 2008 September 1 to 2010 June 25	2008-2010
3. Correspondence	4	6	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1949 June-July	1949
3. Correspondence	4	7	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1949 August	1949
3. Correspondence	4	8	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1949 September - 1950 January	1949-1950
3. Correspondence	4	9	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1950 June-July	1950
3. Correspondence	4	10	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1950 August	1950
3. Correspondence	4	11	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1950 September-October	1950
3. Correspondence	4	12	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1950 November	1950
3. Correspondence	4	13	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1950 December	1950
3. Correspondence	4	14	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1951 January	1951
3. Correspondence	4	15	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1951 February	1951

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
3. Correspondence	4	16	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1951 March 1-May 14	1951
3. Correspondence	4	17	Correspondence with Tom Corothers: 1951 May 15-31	1951
3. Correspondence	4	18	Correspondence with Tom Corothers	1957
4. Poetry	4	19	Poetry 1. Nature 2. Faith	2003
4. Poetry	4	20	Poetry 3. Love 4. Anger 5. Humor	2003
4. Poetry	4	21	Poetry 6. Death 7. Grief	2003
4. Poetry	4	22	Poetry 8. Philosophy	2003
4. Poetry	4	23	Poetry 9. Age 10. Miscellaneous	2003
5. Original Writings	5	1	Original Drafts of Writing (1)	1949-2001 circa
5. Original Writings	5	2	Original Drafts of Writing (2)	1950-1977 circa
5. Original Writings	5	3	Original Drafts of Writing (3)	1952-2001 circa
5. Original Writings	5	4	Original Drafts of Writing (4)	1953-1989 circa
5. Original Writings	5	5	Original Drafts of Writing (5)	1959-1976 circa
5. Original Writings	5	6	Original Drafts of Writing (6)	1976-1982 circa
5. Original Writings	5	7	Original Drafts of Writing (7)	1976-2001 circa
5. Original Writings	5	8	Original Drafts of Writing (8)	2001 circa
5. Original Writings	5	9	Original Drafts of Writing (9)	2002 circa
5. Original Writings	5	10	Original Drafts of Writing (10)	2002-2003 circa
5. Original Writings	5	11	Original Drafts of Writing (11)	2004 circa
5. Original Writings	5	12	Original Drafts of Writing (12)	2004-2005 circa
5. Original Writings	5	13	Original Drafts of Writing (13)	2005-2009 circa
5. Original Writings	5	14	Original Drafts of Writing (14)	2006-2010 circa
5. Original Writings	5	15	Original Drafts of Writing (15)	undated

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
6. Diary Excerpts: 1949 Diary	5	16	Copy of Diary A through E: 1949 January 1 to March 18	1949
6. Diary Excerpts: 1949 Diary	5	17	Copy of Diary F through J: 1949 March 19 to May 27	1949
6. Diary Excerpts: 1949 Diary	5	18	Copy of Diary K through O: 1949 May 28 to August 7	1949
6. Diary Excerpts: 1949 Diary	5	19	Copy of Diary P through T: 1949 August 8 to October 17	1949
6. Diary Excerpts: 1949 Diary	5	20	Copy of Diary U through Y: 1949 October 18 to December 15	1949
6. Diary Excerpts: 1949 Diary	5	21	Copy of Diary Z through 1950 D: 1949 December 16 to 1950 January 31	1949-1950
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	22	Excerpts from early diaries - thoughts from daily entries	1948-1955
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	23	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1948 October 20 to 1949 October 8	1948-1949
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	24	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1949 October 8 to 1950 January 11	1949-1950
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	25	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1950 January 12 to February 10	1950
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	26	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1950 April 9 to August 24	1950
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	27	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1950 August 24 to 1951 January 13	1950-1951
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	28	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1951 January 11 to July 1	1951
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955	5	29	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage:	1951-1953

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
Courtship and Early Marriage			1951 June 24 to 1953 January 29	
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	30	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1953 January 30 to 1954 February 11	1953-1954
6. Diary Excerpts: 1948-1955 Courtship and Early Marriage	5	31	Excerpts from diaries on courtship and marriage: 1954 February 12 to 1955 March 16	1954-1955
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	32	Excerpts from diaries: 1955 March 17 to 1956 July 29	1955-1956
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	33	Excerpts from diaries: 1956 July 30 to 1957 July 22	1956-1957
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	34	Excerpts from diaries: 1957 July 23 to 1958 April 27	1957-1958
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	35	Excerpts from diaries: 1958 April 28 to November 19	1958
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	36	Excerpts from diaries: 1958 November 19 to 1959 September 18	1958-1959
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	37	Excerpts from diaries: 1959 September 19 to 1960 May 29	1959-1960
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	38	Excerpts from diaries: 1960 May 29 to December 24	1960
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	39	Excerpts from diaries: 1960 December 25 to 1961 July 25	1960-1961
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973	5	40	Excerpts from diaries: 1961 July 26 to 1962 February 15	1961-1962

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
Marriage and Family				
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	41	Excerpts from diaries: 1962 February 16 to September 24	1962
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	42	Excerpts from diaries: 1962 September 25 to 1963 May 19	1962-1963
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	43	Excerpts from diaries: 1963 May 20 to November 19	1963
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	44	Excerpts from diaries: 1963 November 19 to 1964 May 29	1963-1964
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	45	Excerpts from diaries: 1964 May 29 to December 19	1964
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	46	Excerpts from diaries: 1964 December 19 to 1965 July 10	1964-1965
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	47	Excerpts from diaries: 1965 July 10 to 1966 January 29	1965-1966
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	48	Excerpts from diaries: 1966 January 29 to August 4	1966
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	49	Excerpts from diaries: 1966 August 5 to 1967 May 14	1966-1967
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	50	Excerpts from diaries: 1967 May 14 to 1968 April 19	1967-1968
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973	5	51	Excerpts from diaries: 1968 April 19 to 1969 February 4	1968-1969

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
Marriage and Family				
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	52	Excerpts from diaries: 1969 February 4 to October 28	1969
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	53	Excerpts from diaries: 1969 October 28 to 1970 June 29	1969-1970
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	5	54	Excerpts from diaries: 1970 June 30 to December 12	1970
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	6	1	Excerpts from diaries: 1970 December 13 to 1971 June 24	1970-1971
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	6	2	Excerpts from diaries: 1971 June 24 to December 17	1971
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	6	3	Excerpts from diaries: 1971 December 17 to 1972 June 22	1971-1972
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	6	4	Excerpts from diaries: 1972 June 23 to October 24	1972
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	6	5	Excerpts from diaries: 1972 October 24 to 1973 May 21	1972-1973
6. Diary Excerpts: 1955-1973 Marriage and Family	6	6	Excerpts from diaries: 1973 May 21 to May 28	1973
7. General	6	7	Background and biographical information	
7. General	6	8	Confirmation Bible	1943
7. General	6	9	Correspondence Peggy Gordon Miller	2002-2007

<b>Series</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
7. General	6	10	Correspondence regarding transfer of papers	2004-2010
7. General	6	11	My Grief Notebook	1998-2002
7. General	6	12	Newspaper Clippings	2009
7. General	6	13	Our Trip to the Yellowstone	1948
7. General	6	14	Writings Memories and Reflections	undated
7. General	6	15	Writings Personal thoughts on marriage, religion, etc.	undated
2. Diaries	6	16	Diary 38: 2010	2010
4. Poetry	6	17	Lists of poems: first line of titles in order of tables (notebook) recordings	undated
4. Poetry	6	18	Lyrics by Laja	undated
4. Poetry	6	19	Meditations in Church	2009
4. Poetry	6	20	Notebook I	1954-2001, undated
4. Poetry	6	21	Notebook II	1950-2002, undated
4. Poetry	6	22	Notebook III	2003, undated
4. Poetry	6	23	Notebook IV	2007, undated
4. Poetry	6	24	Notebook V	undated
4. Poetry	6	25	Poems various formats	undated
4. Poetry	6	26	Untitled typescripts (Autumn Lady is first poem)	1950-2001, undated
7. General	6	27	U.S. Flag flown for Mr. T.E. Corothers	1991