

Diary/memoir 1935 Sikko Barghoorn (1873-?)



This is an extraordinary handwritten memoir. The handwritten diary pages are all preserved in archival sleeves in a binder. The document was written in 1935 by Sikko Barghoorn, a wealthy business man in Spokane, Washington.

This excerpt from *The History of the City of Spokane* (1912) provides an outline of Sikko Barghoorn's public achievements from his birth in 1873 until 1912, aged 39.

"Sikko Barghoorn, general agent at Spokane for the Netherlands American Mortgage Bank, has in this connection become well known as a representative of financial interests in this city and has proven his worth as an enterprising and resourceful business man. He was born in Groningen, Holland, on the 18th of January, 1873 and after completing his education there in the government high school, entered the employ of the Netherlands American Mortgage Bank of his native city, with which he has since been connected. After a brief period, in which he had proven his worth and adaptability, he was sent by the bank to America in 1893 and made his way direct to Spokane. Soon afterward he opened an office at Pullman, Washington, and later at Moscow, Idaho, but in 1907 took up his permanent abode in Spokane where, as representative for the

company he has done an extensive business in farm mortgages, loaning about three million dollars on farm properties in the Spokane country, while about ten million dollars of the company's funds have been loaned in the United States. He is also a director of the Spokane and Eastern Trust Company and is a prominent figure in financial circles, thoroughly versed on realty values and manifesting keen discrimination in the placement of investments. On the 15th of June, 1902, Mr. Barghoorn was married to Miss Franc McConnell, a daughter of Richard d. McConnell, a resident of Moscow, Idaho. Three children have been born of this union; Sikko Richard, Catherine Anna and Winston William. The family home is at N. 825 East Mission Avenue, in one of the attractive residence districts of the city. Mr. Barghoorn is well known socially through his membership in the Spokane Club, the Spokane County Club, and the Spokane Amateur Athletic Club. He not only easily wins friends but has the happy faculty of retaining the warm regard of those with whom he is associated. He has proven his worth in the business world, the company which he represents finding him a most trustworthy and capable representative, who has expert knowledge of the realty and financial situation of this section of the country in which he operates and therefore makes judicious investments that are proving a source of gratifying profit."

The memoir, written when Sikko Barghoorn was 62, picks up his life story and takes it beyond 1912. Why 'diary/memoir'? Because at the beginning of the document he writes about his life until 1935. Then his daily diary entries begin, interspersed with recollections.

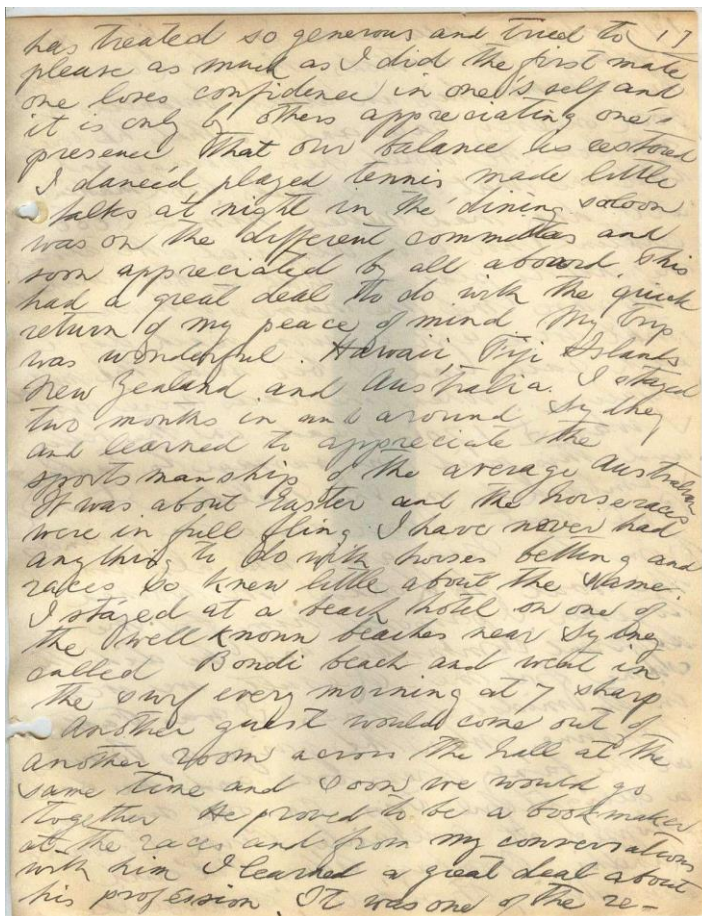
Not only are there so many handwritten pages but SB collected a great deal of ephemera - newspaper clippings, photos, letters, receipts, telegrams - and placed them in this journal. Barghoorn doesn't seem to hold anything back. These may be his deepest thoughts and feelings. Here's his first page:

"August 4th, 1935

It is nearly eight years since I wrote last in my daybook. In the meantime I had fallen in the habit of writing my thoughts in the form of poetry (if it can be called this) and I had this, a sufficient outlet to

put my impressions on record. However it does not fully record the events of my life and I have decided to recommence my daybook, not as a diary, but more as a description of my various enterprises and activities. In reading over the pages of my last recordings I still find my feelings reverting to the past and the old family relations uppermost. Their grief has by now entirely disappeared and in its place has some a feeling of happiness and contentment, such as I have not known since the first ten years of my married life. Every day is a new day to me, bringing new sensations and new outlook on life. My last recordings mentioned the beginning of my sexual and social life and I shall pass over the same briefly. After my initiation in the mysteries of love and sex, I met a great many girls, I drifted from one to another. At last a "liaison" with a married woman added a great deal of spice to the situation but with me it was simply the "biological urge" and not immorally, unmorality..."

Thus SB meditated on his life and experiences. More excerpts:



has treated so generous and tried to please as much as I did the first male one loves confidence in one's self and it is only by others appreciating one's presence. What our balance has cost me I danced played tennis made little talks at night in the dining saloon was on the different committees and soon appreciated by all aboard. This had a great deal to do with the quick return of my peace of mind. My trip was wonderful. Hawaii, Fiji Islands New Zealand and Australia. I stayed two months in and around Sydney and learned to appreciate the sportsmanship of the average Australian. It was about Easter and the horse races were in full swing. I have never had anything to do with horses betting and races so knew little about the game. I stayed at a beach hotel on one of the well known beaches near Sydney called Bondi beach and went in the surf every morning at 7 sharp. Another guest would come out of another room across the hall at the same time and soon we would go together. He proved to be a bookmaker at the races and from my conversations with him I learned a great deal about his profession. It was one of the re-

"Several events had taken place in the life of the ex-mate before our marriage, but this is not the place to make mention of them. Only will I say this: "Had I had the worldly wisdom and experience which is mine today I doubt it I would have chosen her for the wife and for the mother of my children. But love is blind and what is, is!!

"We had our saddle horses, mine the well known roan called

“Foxy” a strong sturdy horse that carried me many time from 50 to 75 miles over rough mountain trails and hers a present from me before our marriage called “Topsy”, a small lively black mare, full of tricks and fun and of an affectionate nature, always whinnying when I would come near. Those first weeks spent on top of the mountain, wonderful view, comfort, open air life, horseback rides thru the wood, shall never be forgotten....”

“August 18th, 1935

... The years are slipping by so quickly that it almost frightens me. Tho I live a full happy life without many cares and worries and pick a few flowers by the wayside once in a while. I hate to see the 60 years come! Last January 18th, 1935, I was 60 years old. It has not yet made any change in my sexual life. I can still enjoy a woman tho the urge is not as great as it used to be. When I could not stay with the family for more reasons for which I have already described in a former daybook, I took the Niagara S.S. at Vancouver B.C. and commenced my trip around the world. I did not know at that time just what I could find in the way of a new business as I had given all I had to the ex-mate for her support and the support and education of the children. I was entirely at sea, figuratively speaking as well as bodily. I met many charming people on board of the ship and made a great many friends. This compensated me for my loss of family and restored my confidence in myself...” [He traveled to Hawaii, the Fiji Islands and elsewhere, describing these journeys and setting down his feelings].

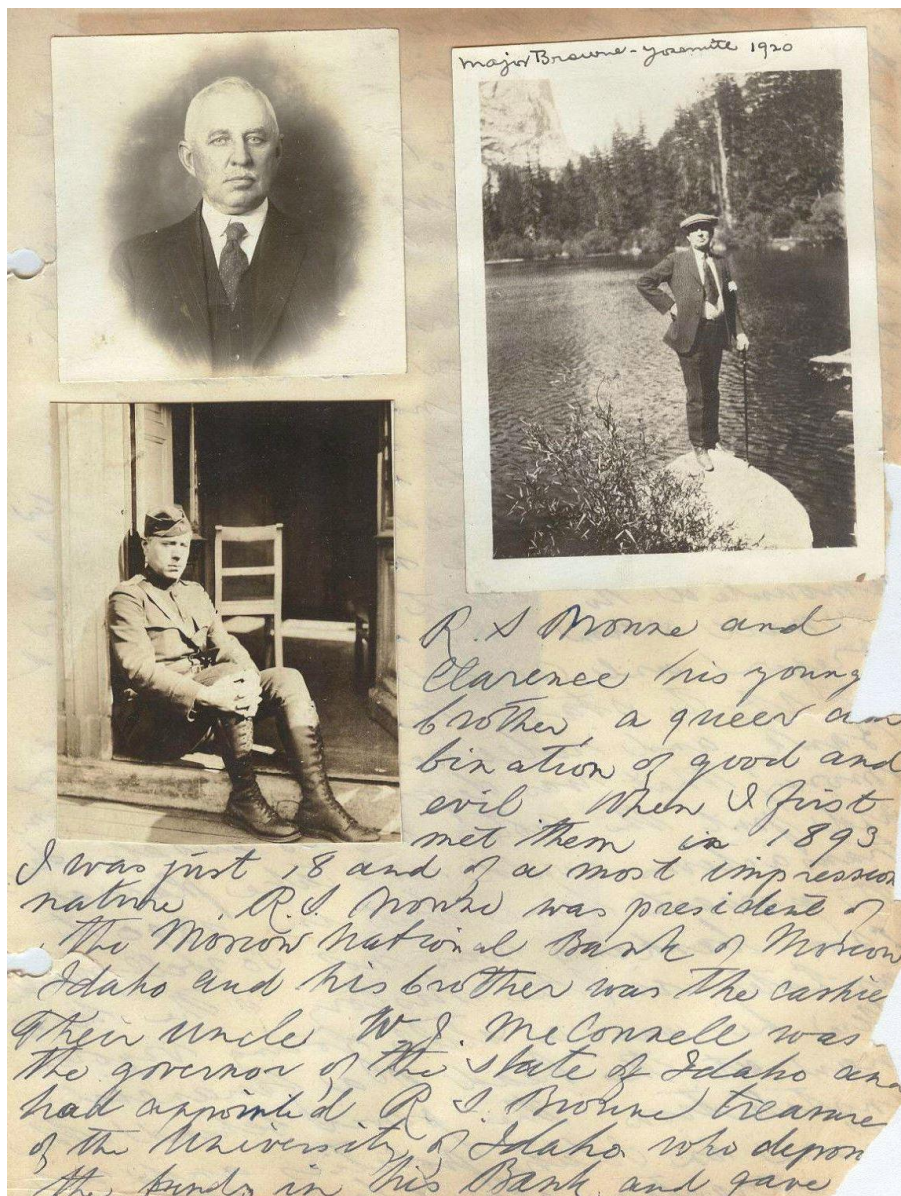
Here SB wrote the following passage under a newspaper photo and article about a man named Hubert A. M. Temminck, who was murdered.

“Here was one of my best friends; impetuous riotous wild but so full of life and energy and of a great charm and wonderful personality. I helped him on the first rungs of the ladder of success. He was ambitious, true, honest and a fair intellect overshadowed by his desire for women. He deserved a longer and happier life.”

Another newspaper article pasted to the pages relating to the following

handwritten notes:

“A foolhardy, useless attempt to play the hero and at the risk of my own life, tried to pull a dead man from a blazing room that was hotter than hell and a regular trap as the door was barricaded and swelled that it could only be opened by an ax in the hands of experienced firemen. Never again, once is enough.”



These partial excerpts take us up to page 37. There are another 100 pages to explore: SB's move to Spokane, his business, his wife, his travels in the US and abroad, his children, his thoughts on trying to save a man from a burning building, his arrest for breaking quarantine laws, his divorce, his

affairs, unfaithful wife. Some of the entries are very open and frank.

All the 150 or so pages of this memoir are loose but they are all accounted for in a binder. Each page measures about 8" x 10 3/4".