Descriptive Summary
Title: Records of Helen D. and Prentiss French
Dates: 1932-1978
Collection number: 1998-12
Creator: French, Helen D., 1900-1994
Creator: French, Prentiss, 1894-1989
Collector: Environmental Design Archives
Extent: 1 box, 3 flat file drawers
Repository: Environmental Design Archives. College of Environmental Design.
University of California, Berkeley, California
Abstract: The French collection consists of project files and drawings arranged into four series: professional papers from both Helen and Prentiss French, projects by Helen French, projects by both Helen and Prentiss French, and projects by Prentiss French. Their projects consist mainly of houses in Northern California and Florida. The records also include photographs of the site of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant and a PG&E station. Helen French's oversize drawings consist of various residences, while Prentiss French's large drawings are from landscape designs of Harvey Mudd College, the University of Alaska, and US Army Air Defense Missile Sites.
Physical location: Environmental Design Archives University of California Berkeley, California, 94720-1820
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Access
Collection open for research.
Publication Rights
All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in the collection should be discussed with the Curator.
Preferred Citation
Acquisition Information
The Environmental Design Archives accessioned this collection in 1998.
Biographical Note
Architect Helen Douglass French and her husband, landscape architect Prentiss French, worked together and independently in New England, Florida, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Helen Douglass was born in 1900 in Arlington, MA. earning her
graduate degree at the Cambridge School of Architecture (1917-1921) -- now part of the Harvard School of Architecture. She subsequently worked in the Boston offices of Charles G. Loring (1921-1925) and William Delano Aldrich (1925-1926), later studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and traveling in Europe (1926-1927). Prentiss French was born in 1894 in Chicago, IL. He earned his Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture from Harvard in 1921 subsequently working in the office of the Olmsted Brothers (1921-1924), and teaching at the University of Massachusetts in 1925. From 1926-1928, Prentiss was employed as the resident landscape architect for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, then establishing the new town of Venice, FL.

Helen and Prentiss married in 1927, and operated a private practice in Boston and Stockbridge, MA between 1928-1932. They then relocated to Sarasota, Florida where they worked in association with architect Clarence Martin for ten years. During WWII, Prentiss was employed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1942-1946) after which they moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where Helen Douglass French received her California certification in 1946. The couple shared an office in San Francisco from 1947 into the 1960s, working primarily on residential projects throughout Northern California. Prentiss French also completed numerous projects for the U.S. Army in the late 1950s, in California, Alaska and other western states. Helen was a member of the AIA Northern California Chapter, the San Francisco Planning and Housing Association, the Outdoors Arts Club of Mill Valley, the Marin Art and Garden Center, the Women's League of San Francisco, and served as the secretary for the Mill Valley Parks and Recreation Commission. Prentiss passed away around 1989, and Helen followed in 1994.

**SOURCES:**

- Helen Douglass French membership file, AIA, Washington D.C.

**Scope and Content Note**

The French collection consists primarily of drawings and specifications documenting the French’s collaborative and individual work. The majority of the records are those of Helen D. French and is largely architectural in nature. The records are arranged into four series: Professional Papers, 1932-1978; Helen D. and Prentiss French Project Records, 1933-1970; Prentiss French Project Records, 1933-1941; and Helen D. French Project Records, 1936-1959.

Project records consist of drawings, specifications and photographs and some client correspondence. These include records from the French's early work with Clarence Martin in Sarasota, Florida, and Northern California residential projects completed during the 1950s and 60s. In addition to residential work, the records also include photographs of the site of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, a PG&E station, and a quadrangle for Harvey Mudd College. Drawings by Prentiss French for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were transferred to the National Archives, Alaska region.

**Arrangement**


**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

**Subjects**

- Landscape architects--California.
- Landscape architecture--California.
- Architects--California.
- Architecture--California.
- Landscape architects--Florida.
- Landscape architecture--Florida.
- Architects--Florida.
- Architecture--Florida.

**Genres and Forms of Material**

- Architectural records.
- Architectural drawings.
- Landscape architecture drawings.
Index Terms Related to this Collection
French, Prentiss.
French, Helen D.

Project Index
The following is a list of architectural projects from the Helen D. and Prentiss French Collection. For instructions on interpreting the Project Index, see The Guide to the Project Index at http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives/pindexguide.htm .

The Project Index list is arranged alphabetically by Project/Client Name and contains information, where available, about the location, date, project type, creators, and formats for each project in the collection.

Project/Client Name (location, date, project type) Creator [role] Format [Ms=Manuscripts, Dr=Drawings, Ph=Photographs]

• Atterbury, Kirby, Jr. (Paradise Cove, CA; 1954; residential) [Dr]
• Bailey, Richard J. (San Rafael, CA; 1957; residential) [Dr]
• Beers, Sherman J. (Kent Woodlands, Kentfield, CA; 1951-1952; residential) [Dr]
• Boynton (Ukiah, CA; 1959; residential) [Dr]
• Byles, Axtell J. (Sarasota, FL; 1937; residential) Collaborator: French, Leigh Jr. (architect) [Dr]
• Chesterwood (Cresson, W.P.), alterations (Stockbridge, MA; 1954, 1957, 1962; residential) [Dr]
• Christo, Mrs. George (San Francisco, CA; 1961; residential) [Dr]
• Clark, Bruce (Bay Point Park, Sarasota, FL; 1937; residential) Collaborator: Clarence Martin, (architect) [Dr]
• Cochrane, Andrew H. (Palo Alto, CA; 1950-1951; residential) [Ms, Dr]
• Cook, S.C. (Mill Valley, CA; n.d.; residential) [Dr]
• Cresson, W.P. (see Chesterwood)
• Daddisman, Rex A. (San Francisco, CA; 1949; residential) [Dr, Ph]
• Davis, Captain B.P. (Mill Valley, CA; 1948; residential) [Dr]
• Davis, Duncan, alterations (San Francisco, CA; 1951; residential) [Dr]
• Douglass, Donald C. (Sarasota, FL; 1955-1958; residential) [Dr]
• Dunnigan, M.W. (San Francisco, CA; 1956; residential) [Dr]
• Dynes, Charles, remodel (San Francisco, CA; 1953; residential) [Dr]
• Elsener, L.A. (Sonoma, CA; 1956; residential) [Dr]
• Evers, Frank (Sarasota, FL; 1935, 1958-1959; residential) [Ms, Dr]
• Eyde, Richard B.: Fairlawn Drive (Berkeley, CA; 1950; residential) Photographer: Baer, M. [Ms, Dr, Ph]
• Eyde, Richard B.: Overlook Road, Park Hills, Unit #2 (Berkeley, CA; 1953; residential) [Ms, Dr]
• Fassett, Truman (Bay Island, Sarasota, FL; 1936; residential) Collaborator: Clarence Martin, (architect) [Ms, Dr]
• Finley, Malcolm H. (San Rafael, CA; 1950; residential) [Dr]
• French, Helen D. & Prentiss (Bay Island, Sarasota, FL; 1936; residential) Collaborator: Clarence Martin, (architect) [Dr]
• French, Helen D. & Prentiss (Kent Woodlands, Kentfield, CA; 1950; residential) Photographer: Baer, M. [Ms, Dr, Ph]
• French, Helen D. & Prentiss (San Francisco, CA; 1962; residential) [Dr]
• Ganz, Frederick M. (Lake Tahoe, CA; 1947; residential) [Ms, Dr, Ph]
• Gleason, F.B. (Bay Island, Sarasota, FL; 1938; residential) Collaborator: Clarence Martin, (architect) [Dr]
• Greyfords Park (Ojus, FL; 1933; recreational) [Dr]
• Guest, Mrs. Frederick E. (Palm Beach, FL; 1935; residential) [Dr]
• Gyseenberg, P.H. (San Rafael, CA; 1951, 1954; residential) [Dr]
• Harvey Mudd College (Claremont, CA; 1955-1957; educational) [Dr]
• Hasenauer, R.P. (Mill Valley, CA; 1948, 1955; residential) [Dr]
• Hersloff, Nils B. (Stockbridge, MA; 1940-1941; residential) [Dr]
• Hill, Austin (San Francisco, CA; 1962; residential) [Dr]
• Hitzrot, James Morley (Bay Island, Sarasota, FL; 1938; residential) [Dr]
Records of Helen D. and Prentiss French, 1932-1978

I. Professional Papers 1932-1978

Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically.

Contains published materials relating to site planning, construction, and materials, course materials from the Cambridge School of Architecture and a small amount of correspondence.

II. Helen D. and Prentiss Project Records 1933-1970

Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Files arranged alphabetically by project.

Includes drawings of residences in Sarasota, Florida, and California. Also contains photographs of Diablo Canyon from 1968.
III. Prentiss French Project Records 1933-1941

Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Files arranged alphabetically by project.
Contains drawings from residences in Florida and Massachusetts and a 1978 letter regarding a "Jefferson lap desk." Drawings include landscape designs for Harvey Mudd College, the University of Alaska, and the United States Army.

IV. Helen D. French Project Records 1936-1959

Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Files arranged alphabetically by project.
Includes drawings of residences in Sarasota, Florida, and various California locations, including Palo Alto, Ukiah, San Francisco, Lake Tahoe, San Rafael, Mill Valley, Indio, and Carpinteria.


Physical Description: Box 1, Flat Files

A. Correspondence 1961, 1978
Physical Description: 3 flat files, 3 folders

Box 1, Folder 1
Paris Gardens 1961

Box 1, Folder 2
Jefferson Lap Desk 1978

B. Reference Files undated
Physical Description: 1 tube

Box 1, Folder 3
Structural Information n.d.

Box 1, Folders 4
Materials/Construction 1936-1937

Box 1, Folder 5
Landscape and Site Planning 1936, 1962-64

II. Helen D. and Prentiss French Project Records 1936-1959
Physical Description: Boxes 3-4, Flat Files

**See Project Index

III. Prentiss French Project 1933-1941
Physical Description: Box 1, Flat Files, Tubes

**See Project Index

IV. Helen D. French Project Records 1936-1959
Physical Description: Box 1, Flat Files, Tubes

**See Project Index