Finding aid to the Kate Stephens Papers, ca. 1898-1952 LA.1994.0411.003

Finding aid prepared by M. Myers
San Diego Natural History Museum Research Library
2018-10-02
1788 El Prado, Balboa Park
San Diego, CA 92101
library@sdnhm.org
URL: http://sdnhm.org/science/research-library
**Language of Material:** English

**Contributing Institution:** San Diego Natural History Museum Research Library

**Title:** Kate Stephens Papers

**Creator:** Stephens, Kate (Kate Brown), ca. 1853-1954

**Identifier/Call Number:** LA.1994.0411.003

**Physical Description:** .5 Linear Feet

**Date (inclusive):** ca. 1898-1952

**Abstract:** The Kate Stephens Papers consists of 12 folders of material relating to her work for the San Diego Society of Natural History. The collection includes original field notes, diaries, and logs of her work as Curator of Collections for the Society and as Curator of Mollusks and Marine Invertebrates for the San Diego Natural History Museum.


**Conditions Governing Access**
The collection is open to researchers by appointment. Contact the Research Library Director, San Diego Natural History Museum.

**Biographical / Historical**
Kate Stephens (née Brown) was born in London circa 1853; she immigrated to the United States between 1888 and 1890, settling in the east San Diego County community of Witch Creek. She married naturalist Frank Stephens in 1898 and traveled with him on many collecting trips throughout San Diego and Imperial Counties in the early 1900s. She participated in the 1902 Colorado Desert expedition for the U. S. Biological Survey and the 1907 University of California Alexander expedition to southeastern Alaska. An authority on terrestrial and marine mollusks including fossils, she was first hired by the San Diego Society of Natural History as Curator of Collections in 1908 and served as Curator of Mollusks and Marine Invertebrates at the San Diego Natural History Museum from 1910 until 1936; she continued her conchology work into her mid-90s. She died in 1954.

**Preferred Citation**
[Identification of item], Kate Stephens Papers, ca. 1898-1952. Research Library, San Diego Natural History Museum.

**Scope and Contents**
The collection consists of field and work diaries of naturalist Kate Stephens.

**Conditions Governing Use**
Copyright may be reserved. Consult the San Diego Natural History Museum Research Library Director for more information.

**Related Materials**
Frank Stephens Field Notes Collection

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Field notes
Diaries
Women naturalists -- United States
Natural history--California.
Mollusks
Marine invertebrates
Paleontology -- California -- San Diego
Stephens, Frank, 1849-1937
Brandegee, Townshend Stith, 1843-1925
San Diego Society of Natural History
Stephens, Kate (Kate Brown), ca. 1853-1954
Baker, Frederick, 1854-1938
Fischer, Arthur F., (Arthur Frederick), 1888-1962
Grant, U. S., IV (Ulysses S.), 1893-1977

---

**Finding aid to the Kate Stephens Papers, ca. 1898-1952**

LA.1994.0411.003
Box 178, Folder 1  **Biographical material 1852-1954**

Scope and Contents

News clippings and photographs

Box 178, Folder 2  **Agreement 1952**

Scope and Contents

Letter dated February 6, 1952; donation agreement between San Diego Society of Natural History and Evan Tollitt-Brown (guardian) regarding Kate Stephens's library.

Box 178, Folder 3  **Field Notes circa 1901**

Scope and Contents

Field notes of a collecting trip in San Diego and Imperial Counties made by Kate Stephens and her husband Frank Stephens. Entries dated from October 7 through October 25, year not given, circa 1901. “My first desert trip.” Localities include Banner; La Puerta; Laguna Mountains; Vallecito; Carrizo Creek; Palmetto Spring; Colorado River; Pelican Lake; Salton Sea; San Jacinto; Duck Lake; San Felipe Valley. Includes 3 pages of notes, book references in Frank Stephens’s hand at end of volume.

Box 178, Folder 4  **Field Diary October 7-25, ca. 1901 (transcription)**

Scope and Contents

Loose pages, handwritten transcription by Kate Stephens of field notes from collecting trip from October 7 through October 25, circa 1901. Localities in San Diego and Imperial counties include La Puerta (Oct 10), Palmetta Spring (Oct 11), Pelican Lake (Oct 14), San Jacinto (Oct 16), Duck Lake (Oct 17), the boundary of California and Mexico (Oct 18), Carizzo Creek (Oct 20), Vallecetto (Oct 23) Banner Canyon, San Felipe Valley (Oct 25).

Handwritten transcription (in ink) of field notes Kate Stephens composed (in pencil) in a small memorandum notebook during collecting trip, circa 1901. This transcription is missing the final entries of the notebook. See the related item for complete field notes.

Box 178, Folder 5  **Field Notes 1902a**

Scope and Contents

Field notes dated May 5, 1902 through May 29, 1902. One of four notebooks from a four-month collecting trip in the Mojave Desert (California and Arizona) for the U.S. Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture with field specialist Frank Stephens and botanist T. S. Brandegee. Localities include Santa Margarita Ranch, San Mateo Creek, San Juan Capistrano, San Bernardino County, Bagdad, Cadiz, Danby.

Box 178, Folder 6  **Field Notes 1902b**

Scope and Contents

Field notes dated May 5, 1902 through June 10, 1902. The second of four notebooks from a four-month collecting trip in the Mojave Desert (California and Arizona) for the U.S. Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture with field specialist Frank Stephens and botanist T. S. Brandegee. Localities include Santa Margarita Ranch, San Mateo Creek, San Juan Capistrano, and San Bernardino County localities including Bagdad, Cadiz, Danby, Fenner, Blake, Java, Needles. Includes pages which reproduce material from 1902a notebook for the period May 5-29, 1902.
Box 178, Folder 7  **Field Diary 1902c**

**Scope and Contents**
Field notes dated June 11, 1902 through August 7, 1902. The third of four notebooks from a four-month collecting trip in the Mojave Desert (California and Arizona) with field specialist Frank Stephens for the U.S. Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture. Localities in Arizona include Camp Bowie (near Willcox), Needles, Little Meadows, Kingman, Beales Spring, Hualapai Mountains, Potato Patch, Juniper Heights, Hualapai Spring, Bill Williams Fork (Colorado River), Signal, Planet, Mineral Wash, Parker, Ehrenburg. A handwritten transcription of these field notes exists, written by Kate Stephens on looseleaf paper in ink.

Box 178, Folder 8  **Field Diary 1902c (transcription)**

**Scope and Contents**
Loose pages; handwritten transcription of field notebook 1902c, chronicling collecting trip in Arizona June 11, 1902 to August 7, 1902.

Box 178, Folder 9  **Field Diary 1902d**

**Scope and Contents**
Field notes dated August 8, 1902 through September 2, 1902. The fourth of four notebooks from a four-month collecting trip in the Mojave Desert (California and Arizona) with field specialist Frank Stephens for the U.S. Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture. Localities include Hodges, the Chuckawalla Mountains, Pala Verde Valley, Cañon Spring, 29 Palms, Salton, Corn Spring, Dos Palms, Fig Tree John's (Coachella Valley).

Box 178, Folder 10  **SDNHM Catalog**

**Scope and Contents**
One notepad (27 pages), handwritten list of books and reprints. Latest item dated 1911. Items numbered 1-99, 300-792.

Box 178, Folder 11  **Work Diary 1914**

**Scope and Contents**
One bound volume, cover labelled "Datebook for 1914." Title page inscribed "The Log of the San Diego Soc. of Nat. History." Entries from January 2, 1914 through October 29, 1914 (later entries do not correspond to printed calendar pages). Includes "Notes for 1915" at end of volume. Record of daily activities in collection care, specimen identification, museum management.

Box 178, Folder 12  **Desert narrative ca. 1930**

**Scope and Contents**
Handwritten narrative (written on one loose sheet and the back on an envelope), entitled "A desert scene's episodes." On reverse of envelope is a handwritten draft of letter from Kate Stephens to U. S. Grant, IV re shells. Envelope postmark cancellation of April 12, 1930.