
Guide to the Patricia Loomis Collection 2008.132

Finding aid prepared by Catherine Mills

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Title: Patricia Loomis Collection

Identifier/Call Number: 2008.132

Contributing Institution: History San Jose Research Library

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 6.0 Linear feet(6 boxes)

Date (bulk): Bulk, 1939-1998

Date (inclusive): 1850-2008

Abstract: Loomis's professional work as a San Jose Mercury News journalist, member of the Argonauts Historical Society, and author of several San Jose (Calif.) local history books is documented through correspondence, bylines, research notes, manuscript drafts, and a large collection of news clippings of local interest.

General Physical Description note: Most of Loomis's notes, bylines and clippings are on newsprint paper and already show signs of fading. Her notes were stored in a variety of acidic paper envelopes. Because of the extent of the collection and expense of transferring the materials to non-acidic materials, it was decided to keep these materials in their original form. To the extent possible, paper clips and staples were removed.

creator: Loomis, Patricia, 1920-2010

Conditions Governing Access note

Materials are open to the public for research by appointment.

Conditions Governing Use note

Property rights reside with History San Jose. For permissions to reproduce or to publish, please contact History San Jose Research Library.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Materials were donated by Pat Loomis to History San Jose in November 2008.

Scope and Contents note

Loomis's professional work as a San Jose Mercury News journalist, member of the Argonauts Historical Society, and author of several San Jose (Calif.) local history books is documented through correspondence, bylines, research notes, manuscript drafts, and a large collection of news clippings of local interest.

Loomis's research notes and clippings provide a wealth of information for those interested in the history of Santa Clara County and its families, particularly those families who came west during the Gold Rush. While much of her research draws upon primary sources available elsewhere, she profiles many families who are not well-known, and draws a picture through her work of everyday life in San Jose. In many cases she has interviewed family members and neighbors. The sheer variety and wealth of background information she amassed is testament to her personal interest in local history, as well as her tenacity, attention to detail and professionalism in her journalism. Her articles are touched with a sense of whimsy and humor that breathe life into her profiles.

Records from the early Statehouse Replica Museum and San Jose Historical Museum, as well as Loomis's detailed notes and itineraries from her Argonauts educational tours, illustrate her relationship with Clyde Arbuckle and their shared, lifelong commitment to promoting the history of the American West, particularly Nevada, California and Oregon.

Of particular note in her manuscripts is the background material on the San Francisco International Airport. Ernie Renzel, the impetus behind the airport's development, gave Loomis all of his original correspondence with the Civil Aviation Commission, San Jose City Council, and the estate of Mary Ives Crocker, providing a rich backdrop to San Jose's development as it headed out of World War II.

Biographical/Historical note

Loomis was born in June 1920 in San Francisco, California, to Ivan and Christine Loomis. She grew up in Arroyo Grande, California, where her family had resided since 1882, descendants of prominent pioneers E. C. and Clara Loomis. After graduating from San Jose State University in 1943 with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism, she went to work at the San Jose Mercury News, where she worked for 40 years. She started out writing church notices, articles based on letters from soldiers, reports on frost and weather for farmers and then moved up to cover the police department and City Hall.

Loomis is best known for her Mercury News column "Signposts" which ran from 1971-1981 and detailed through vignettes the lives of pioneers whose surnames are reflected on streets in the San Jose-South Bay area. A selection of these columns was published as "Signposts" (1982) and "Signposts II" (1985), then combined and reprinted as "Signposts Revisited" in 2009. Her interest in local history also provided the basis for several other publications, "Milpitas: the Century of 'Little Cornfields,' 1852-1952" (1986), "San Jose International Airport" (1991), "A Walk through the Past: San Jose's Oak Hill Memorial Park" (1998), and "The Wealth of California - Today's Agriculture, Yesterday's Gold" (1999).

As an active member of the San Jose Argonauts and the Oregon-California Trails Association, Loomis led or contributed to several group tours tracing pioneer trails through Nevada, Oregon and California and spent considerable personal time researching pioneer history in the U.S. West. She established the Pat Loomis Preservation Fund to help pay for preservation of the Oregon and California trails. Loomis was an original member of the San Jose Historical Museum, and her commitment to advocating for local history was recognized by History San Jose, who dedicated "Loomis Lane" in History Park in 2006. She received the Austen Warburton Award from the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County in March 2006. Also in 2006, the South County Historical Society opened the Patricia Loomis History Library and Resource Center in Arroyo Grande. Loomis moved back to Arroyo Grande in 2007 where she authored two books on that area: "Arroyo Grande Cemetery" and "Streets of Arroyo Grande" and spent time pursuing her other passions for fishing, gardening and canning. In 2010 the South County Historical Society named her Historian of the Year.

Loomis passed away in Arroyo Grande in July 2010.

Preferred Citation note

Patricia Loomis Collection 2008-132, History San Jose Research Library, San Jose, California 95112-2599.

Appraisal note

During processing, some records already held by History San Jose were removed from the collection. Many non-personal and duplicate news items were also removed.

Related Archival Materials note

Loomis's collection overlaps with many other collections held by History San Jose, including

Ernie Renzel Papers (2008-29). Renzel was instrumental in developing the San Jose Airport. Loomis's collection contains Renzel's original correspondence on the subject, as well as her manuscript on the airport's history.

The Research Library maintains copies of all of Loomis's publications.

Separated Materials note

Loose printed matter was removed for Library cataloging in 2009. In the summer of 2010, loose photographs were removed to be cataloged and stored with the Photographs Collection. Maps and blueprints are housed in the map room. Ephemera and some news clippings were also removed and stored separately. These remain part of the same accession but are not included in this guide. PastPerfect records are available in-house.

Processing Information note

Personal papers were arranged and cataloged by a volunteer archivist during the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011. Any existing order established by Loomis was preserved.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

San Jose Mercury-news.

Genealogy

Local history--research

Overland journeys to the Pacific

Pioneers--California--Santa Clara County

REPORTER (print. & pub.; radio-tv broad.)

San Jose (Calif.)

Santa Clara County (Calif.)

Box 1

Personal correspondence and biographical clippings 2008-132 (1000-1002) 1951-2005

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet(3 folders)

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence between Loomis and friends, members of the public. Most were requests for historical research and local information. Very few are personal letters. A full Container List is available in-house. Three biographical clippings detail Loomis's Milpitas book release, a 1986 history award, and a California Trail history trip in 1977.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

clippings (information artifacts)

correspondence

Box 1

San Jose Historical Museum records 2008-132-1003 1964-1991

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet(1 folder)

Scope and Contents note

Includes institutional records from the Statehouse Replica Museum and the San Jose Historical Museum (precursor to History San Jose). Museum clippings, Park Bench Program records, Loomis's notes for related articles. A full Container List is available in-house.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

History San Jose. (San Jose, Calif.)

San Jose Historical Museum Association.

Statehouse Replica Museum. (San Jose, Calif.)

business records

Museums--California--San Jose

Box 1, Box 1

Historical tour materials 2008-132 (1009-1013) 1974-1986

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.3 Linear feet(5 folders)

Scope and Contents note

Contains itineraries, postcards, clippings, passenger lists and notes from Loomis's historical tours: Anza Trail Tour of Arizona 1974; Argonaut Tour of Overland Trails 1977; Mendocino County Argonauts Trip (1979); Anza Trail Tour and other tours 1979-1980; Carson City to Tragedy Springs Tour (1986).

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Anza, Juan Bautista de, 1735-1788

Arbuckle, Clyde, 1903-

Argonauts Historical Society. (San Jose, Calif.)

Metropolitan Adult Education Program. (San Jose, Calif.)

Oregon-California Trails Association.

Mendocino County (Calif.)

Santa Fe National Historic Trail

Sierra Nevada (Calif. and Nev.) Description and travel.

Box 1

ByLines 2008-132 (1014-1035) 1940-1982

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet(3 folders, 19 envelopes)

Scope and Contents note

Three folders contain loose clippings, mostly from the Mercury News, of Loomis's own stories. They are arranged chronologically. Signpost articles that were found loose, without notes, are included in her bylines. Articles that included her research notes are found in the Research Notes. Loomis also kept 9.5x14" envelopes of her clippings arranged by year, with topics written on front.

Box 3, Box 2

Signpost research and articles 2008-132 (1037-1105) 1970-1981

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 1.5 Linear feet(1.5 boxes)

Scope and Contents note

Contains all of Loomis's notes, drafts, and in many cases, final copies, of her "Signposts" articles for the Mercury News. For the most part they are maintained in Loomis's original envelopes and arranged alphabetically by the subject that either Loomis designated or that has been ascertained from examining the article. This is usually the street name or the family name of the related person. Loomis conducted many interviews with relatives and acquaintances during the course of her research; as a result her notes are useful for genealogy. The subject matter of this series touches on many of the prominent and pioneer families, as well as the history of mining, agriculture, ranching and academics, in the South Bay. Each of Loomis's envelopes was catalogued by subject; an index is available in-house.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

clippings (information artifacts)

drafts (documents)

research notes

Street signs

Streets--California--San Jose--History.

Box 2

Signposts research and articles A-Me 1970-1981

Language of Material: English

Box 3

Signposts research and articles Mo-Z 1970-1981

Language of Material: English

Box 5, Box 4,
Box 3

Research notes by subject 2008-132 (1140-1304) 1850-2000

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 2.5 Linear feet(2.5 boxes)

Scope and Contents note

Loomis's research notes and background materials organized by topic. They have been kept in their original envelopes except where the envelopes were too torn to preserve, and are filed alphabetically according to either Loomis's subject notes on the envelope, or by examining the contents. The subject matter covers a wide geographical area across San Francisco, Santa Clara County, Alameda County, San Benito County and San Leandro County, as well as a comprehensive set of local history and related persons.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

clippings (information artifacts)

research notes

Box 3

Research Notes A, B

Box 4

Research Notes C-N

Greely-Grant Letter 2008-132-1206 1897

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)

creator: Grant, Robert

Scope and Contents note

Original and copies of a letter to "Bro. Greely" from "R. Grant M." dated August 8, 1897, from Pacific Grove, California. The letter also mentions a "Vostrovsky". A note from Loomis reads, "I was unable to find any Greely. Looked in county histories and in 1882 and 1905 directories." A note on the envelope the letter was stored in reads "Came from old house at [Edenvale] Historical Society interested?"

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Greely, Bro. -- Correspondence

Vostrovsky, Jerome

Monterey County (Calif.)--History

Pacific Grove (Calif.)

**Gish, Hughs, Hellyer, Goodyear, Hensley, Belden research notes 2008-132-1198
January 1986**

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)

Scope and Contents note

Background notes and clippings on several families pertaining to Overland Trails. Of interest is a letter to Loomis from Gage McKinney including a detailed history of the Gish-Hughs Families.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Gish, David Ellington

Gish, Mary Jane Glover

Hughes, Thomas Mason

Douglas genealogy 2008-132-1182

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)

Scope and Contents note

Douglas/Douglass family genealogy of unknown origin. Handwritten. Includes several original papers.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Douglas family

Douglass family

birth certificates

Families--California--History--19th century

Methodist Episcopal Church (Charleston, S.C.)

Mining claims

Scots--California--San Jose--Biography

Memorandum of Domestic Occurrence January 23, 1825

Language of Material: English

Scope and Contents note

Handwritten birth record on back of Spring Valley Water Works payment record for Wm. A. Douglas, born January 23, 1825. His mother Sarah Elisa Douglas died on the 11th February 1825. Isaac Richardson and Sarah Elisa Douglas were married between the 12th and 14th of February 1823.

Letter to Mrs. Douglass from Bessie M. Robinson October 28, 1903

Language of Material: English

Scope and Contents note

Handwritten letter sent to 859 Morrison (or Harrison) Street in Oakland, California, starts "Mother had the most uncomfortable day she has had in a long time yesterday; today she is up quite bright and cheerful...I send you a little information about that Balgay property. We should get it but all of this 'red-tape' and English law is tantalizing..." She goes on to detail her family history in Britain, possible links to wealth, and references a Mr. S. Donohoe, millionaire, in San Rafael.

Holland and Douglas family tree

Language of Material: English

Scope and Contents note

Handwritten family tree beginning with John Campbell Holland, b. June 30, 1824, and spouse Sarah Marie Holland, b. March 20, 1830. Children are listed, then one listing for Katherine Emerson Douglass, b. September 28 [year not noted]. "My twin sister" is written next to her name.

Douglas family history

Language of Material: English

Scope and Contents note

Handwritten, four-page history of the Douglas family in Scotland, undated.

Charleston land title October 11, 1824

Language of Material: English

Scope and Contents note

Original agreement between Mr. and Mrs. Douglass and "Committee" consisting of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for a lot on Hasell Street in Charleston, South Carolina, next to the historic Trinity Church.

Mining deed for Ravenswood, Lander County, Nevada Territory December 24, 1863

Language of Material: English

Scope and Contents note

Original mining deed given to William H. Hoburg and William A. Douglass for fifty dollars for rock containing precious metals of gold, silver and copper, described as "Twenty five undivided feet in the Ozark Ledge. Twenty five undivided feet in the Hudson River Ledge and Twenty five feet in the Eclipse Ledge all three of the above ledges being consolidated into one company and known as the George Washington."

San Jose Broom Factory correspondence 2008-132-1264 1926 June - September

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)

creator: Wilcox, Irwin M.

Scope and Contents note

Original set of letters to and from the San Jose Broom Factory (doing business at White & Alameda, San Jose, Calif.). May be the same company as Wilcox I. M. broom manufacturer, listed in a 1926 San Jose business directory.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

San Jose Broom Factory. (San Jose, Calif.) -- Correspondence
Brooms and brushes
Factories--California--San Jose

Box 6

Manuscripts and related research 2008-132 (1305-1315) 1939-2008

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet(11 folders)

Subjects and Indexing Terms

correspondence
manuscripts (document genre)
research notes

San Jose Airport 2008-132 (1305-1310) Bulk, 1939-1952 1939-1991

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet(6 folders)

Scope and Contents note

The San Jose Historical Museum published Loomis's "San Jose International Airport" in 1991. These materials include original correspondence between then-Councilman Ernie Renzel and various government agencies involved in the development of the San Jose Municipal Airport as well as correspondence between Ernie Renzel and the attorneys for the Estate of Mary Ives Crocker regarding purchase of the Stockton Ranch land for airport development. Loomis's undated manuscript with corrections is also included. Item-level lists and descriptions are available in-house.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Aikins, Bronte M.
Anderson, Jack Z., (Jack Zuinglius), 1904-1981
Crocker, Mary Virginia Ives, b. 1863
Nissen, James N., 1915-1994
Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport (Calif.).
Renzel, Ernest H., Jr., 1907-2007
Schmidt, R. F. W.

Milpitas 2008-132 (1311-1312) Bulk, 1980-1985 1876-1985

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(2 folders)

Scope and Contents note

Loomis's book titled "Milpitas: the Century of 'Little Cornfields,' 1852-1952" was published in 1986 by the California History Center in Cupertino, Calif. Folders contain typed drafts circa 1985, background notes, maps and correspondence.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Milpitas (Calif.)

Oak Hill Cemetery 2008-132 (1313-1314) 1996-1998

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.2 Linear feet(2 folders)

Scope and Contents note

The San Jose Argonaut Historical Society published "A Walk through the Past: San Jose's Oak Hill Memorial Park" in 1998. includes Loomis's biographical research on the many pioneers buried in this cemetery.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Cemeteries--California--Guidebooks

Oak Hill Memorial Park (San Jose, Calif.)

Signposts Revisited 2008-132-1315 circa 2009

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 binder)

Scope and Contents note

Binder used during creation of "Signposts Revisited" to track changes and request artwork. Includes a copy of Signposts I and II with new additions, as well as email correspondence.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Street signs

Streets--California--San Jose--History.

Box 6

News clippings, third-party 2008-132 (1316-1371) 1931-1974

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.5 Linear feet(55 envelopes)

creator: Barrett, Dick

creator: O'Brien, Robert, 1911-

Scope and Contents note

Loomis kept extensive clippings files for reference. These include Robert O'Brien's "Riptides" column for the San Francisco Chronicle, Dick Barrett's column in the Mercury News, the "Autologues" series in the Mercury News, and many articles from the Mercury News and other local papers, organized alphabetically by subject and/or year.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

San Francisco Chronicle.

San Francisco (Calif.) History

Riptides series 2008-132-1316 1948

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)

Scope and Contents note

Robert O'Brien's "Riptides" local history series was published from 1939 until 1952 in the San Francisco Chronicle. Only September and October 1948 are included.

Dick Barrett column 2008-132-1317 1969-1971

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.1 Linear feet(1 folder)

Autologues 2008-132 (1318-1337) 1926-

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet(19 folders)

Scope and Contents note

Clippings of articles written for the Mercury Herald, suggesting and recounting "autologues" that reveal the history of Santa Clara County. Incomplete. Amanda M. Miller wrote the series from 1926, John V. Young appears to have taken over in 1939, and then Carroll Hurd in 1941. 1940 is not included.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Automobile travel--California--San Francisco Bay Area

Clippings by subject 2008-132 (1338-1371) 1930-1974

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.25 Linear feet

Scope and Contents note

Loomis's clippings are arranged alphabetically by subject, including clippings from a variety of local newspapers. Subjects include "California History 1936-1974," "California Counties History 1931," "California Centennial 1949," "Agnew (Calif.) 1948-1953," "Boats--River," "Santa Clara University 1951," "Santa Cruz Mt. Towns," "Yosemite." A full index is available in-house.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Agnew (Calif.)