Guide to the Kate Sessions Collection MS 38

Finding aid prepared by Katrina White
Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.
San Diego History Center Document Collection
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San Diego, CA, 92101
619-232-6203
July 11, 2011
Title: Kate Sessions Collection
Identifier/Call Number: MS 38
Contributing Institution: San Diego History Center Document Collection
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 2.0 Linear feet (3 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1876-1940
Abstract: This collection focuses on the early life and European travels of Kate Sessions, San Diego horticulturist and “Mother of Balboa Park.” The collection contains personal diaries and correspondence, as well as scrapbooks, unpublished manuscripts and several articles on Sessions.
creator: Sessions, Kate Olivia, 1857-1940
Conditions Governing Access
This collection is open for research.
Conditions Governing Use
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Immediate Source of Acquisition
Donations from multiple donors were consolidated to create this collection. Accession numbers 770928, 761217, 751219, 830105A, 2002.031, 440601, 650714 and 980404.
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Kate Sessions Collection, MS 38, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.
Processing Information
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Biographical / Historical Notes
Kate Olivia Sessions was born in San Francisco on November 8, 1857. In 1868, her family moved to a ranch in East Oakland where she grew up surrounded by nature, often riding her pony through the countryside and helping her mother in the family garden. She graduated from Oakland High School in 1875. Sessions traveled to Hawaii in 1876 to better her health and entered a San Francisco business college upon her return. In 1877, she entered the University of California at Berkeley, where she studied chemistry and also completed courses on botany, horticulture, and agriculture. Her thesis was entitled “Rock Soap: Chemical Composition, Mineralogical Nature, Geological Occurrence, Technical Value. (Report of Progress).” Sessions received a Bachelor’s Degree from the College of Sciences in 1881 and taught in the Oakland primary school following her graduation.
In 1884, Sessions moved to San Diego to teach and serve as principal at the Russ School. A year later, Sessions partnered with Mr. and Mrs. Solon G. Blaisdell who purchased the San Diego Nursery. The partnership with the Blaisdells dissolved in 1887 and Kate assumed the operation of the Nursery; she also operated a nursery in Coronado and a flower shop in downtown San Diego. In 1892, Kate leased a portion of City Park from the San Diego City Council for the building of a nursery. In exchange, she was named City Gardener and agreed to provide trees for the city’s landscaping projects. She continued to operate the nursery in what is now Balboa Park until the park’s development in 1903 forced her to move. That same year, Sessions opened a nursery in Mission Hills. She sold her flower shop to Alice Rainford in 1909, in order to focus on her nursery. In 1925, Sessions’ friends helped her finance a trip to Europe, where she spent several months traveling through England, France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland and Germany, visiting botanical gardens, exchanging ideas with prominent horticulturists, and obtaining many new plant specimens to introduce in California. In the 1920s, Sessions transitioned to working and living in Pacific Beach, where she operated a nursery for the remaining years of her life. Kate Sessions died in 1940.
Sessions is known for her contributions to San Diego and California horticulture. She traveled to Europe and Baja California, bringing back colorful and drought-resistant plants. Sessions was the first woman to receive the Meyer Medal from the Council of the American Genetics Association and is known as the “Mother of Balboa Park.”
Scope and Content
This collection contains Kate Sessions’ personal diaries and correspondence, including four diaries from her college years in San Francisco, dated 1876-1879, and several volumes of travel journals from her 1925 trip to Europe. The earlier diaries chronicle her life after graduating high school and during the first two years of college at UC Berkeley. The correspondence consists primarily of letters written during Sessions’ 1925 Europe trip addressed to her close friends Mrs. Miles (first name
unknown) and Alice Rainford, as well as other miscellaneous correspondence written during that period. The rest of Sessions’ personal correspondence are letters written during her time in San Diego, many pertaining to membership or awards bestowed upon her by different organizations, as well as other personal correspondence. There are also two letters written by Sessions’ acquaintances about her during her illness and after her death, by Max Matousek and Alice Carroll, respectively. The two scrapbooks in the collection were put together by Sessions’ close friend Alice Carroll, and contain news articles, photographs, and memorabilia dating from her childhood in Oakland through her death in 1940. The collection also contains an unpublished manuscript, researcher’s notes and correspondence by M.M. Frechette (first name unknown) who was in the process of publishing a book on Sessions’ trip to Europe in collaboration with Sessions when she passed away in 1940. Frechette’s papers include direct correspondence between her and Sessions regarding the book and her memories of Europe. The unpublished manuscript includes a general biographical introduction of Kate Sessions written by Frechette, as well as typed transcriptions of Kate’s “Letters from Europe.” The collection also includes several published articles on Sessions including a 1943 article by T.D.A. Cockerell. Finally, the collection contains two books: one from Sessions’ personal library, and another that was given as a gift by Sessions to the daughter of a friend.

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements**

Several pressed plant specimens have been separated from Sessions' diaries and individually encapsulated. The back cover to the book titled “Flowering Plants and Ferns: Cambridge Biological Series” is partly detached. The book titled “Dollikin Dutch” is very fragile. (July 11, 2011)

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into five series:

Series I: Personal Diaries  
Series II: Correspondence  
Series III: Scrapbooks  
Series IV: Manuscripts and Articles  
Series V: Miscellanea

Items within each series are arranged by subject.

**Comments**

Detailed “entries of interest” have been included in collection inventory because no preservation copy of the diaries is available. It is hoped that these detailed notes will assist with easier access to the diaries and thus reduce the need for excess handling.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Agassiz, Louis, 1807-1873  
American Forestry Association.  
Arnold Arboretum.  
Brandegee, Townshend Stith, 1843-1925  
Butterfield, H. M. (Harry Morton), b. 1887  
California Academy of Sciences.  
California School for the Blind.  
California Theater.  
Carroll, Alice C.  
Cassino, Samuel Edson, 1856-1937  
Clayton, Will  
Cockerell, Theodore D. A. (Theodore Dru Alison), 1866-1948  
Davidson, George, 1825-1911  
Davidson, Winifred  
Eastwood, Alice, 1859-1953  
Ebell Society.  
Eigenmann, Rosa Smith, 1858-1947  
Frechette, Miss  
Grant, Julia Dent, 1826-1902  
Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885
Grant, Ulysses S., 1852-1929
Hittell, Theodore Henry, 1830-1917
Hull, Mary
Judd, William Henry
Lewis, Dio, 1823-1886
Livermore, Mary Ashton Rice, 1820-1905
Matousek, Max
Meyer, Frank Nicholas
Miles, Herbert E., Mrs.
Moore, Justin P.
National Botanic Gardens of South Africa.
Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart, 1844-1911
Rainford, Alice N.
San Diego Business and Professional Women's Club.
San Diego Society of Natural History.
Sessions, Frank
Sessions, Kate Olivia, 1857-1940
Sessions, Milton
Shattuck, Mary
University of California, Berkeley.
Vilmorin-Andrieux et cie.
Wade's Opera House.
Wangenheim, Julius
Wark, William O.
Winchester College.
Angel Island (Calif.)
Austria
Balboa Park (San Diego, Calif.)
Berkeley (Calif.)
Bolzano (Italy : Province)
Champlain, Lake
Como, Lake (Italy)
Correspondence
Diaries
Gardening
Gibraltar, Strait of
Gravetye Manor Gardens (England)
Hawaii
Horticulture
Hudson River (N.Y. and N.J.)
Lisbon (Portugal)
London (England)
Luxembourg
Matterhorn (Switzerland and Italy)
Meyer Award
Munich (Germany)
Naples (Italy)
New York (N.Y.)
Nuremberg (Germany)
Nurseries (Horticulture)
Oakland (Calif.)
Paris (France)
Pompeii (Italy)
Rome (Italy)
San Diego (Calif.)
San Francisco (Calif.)
San Jose (Calif.)
Travel
Venice (Italy)

Series I: Personal Diaries
Box-folder 1:1

1876 Diary, 1876 January 1-1877 January 7

Scope and Content
Kate was 18 years old, still living at home with her family in Oakland. Already graduated high school but hadn't entered college yet. This daily diary chronicles the weather, her activities, social events and visits. Many entries refer to her outings and activities with her close friends Florence (initials F.G.P., last name unknown), Rosa Smith and Mary Hull, as well as with her brother Frank and her mother. During this year, Kate attended writing school, travelled to Hawaii, and completed a program at a Business College in San Francisco. Kate’s diary also references her assistance with the financial administration of the family ranch. There are several entries referring to gardening and Kate’s interest in plants and animals. She refers multiple times to her ferns, which she was apparently cultivating in her family’s garden. There are “Cash Account” lists by month in the back of the diary but not all months are filled out.

Entries of interest:

January 9, 1876: “Went to Florence’s at 11 A.M. father and I... Got some ivy and ferns. Windy towards night, looked like rain. Talked of College and Europe.”


February 23, 1876: Reading Sevenoaks by Holland. Also refers to invitation to the California theater to see Mrs. Scott Siddons perform.

February 26, 1876: Reading “The Young Botanist” by J.L. Comstock.

March 2, 1876: “Want to go to sea... Wrote letter to Cornell University for Catalogue – Future business undecided.”

March 15, 1876: “Commenced Joint Stock Mining Co.... Commenced Papa’s Books... Finished Mining Set of Books.”

April 1, 1876: “Frank Z. and I went to ride with grey mare and black buggy – fine style – First boy I ever went off to ride with.”

April 6, 1876: “Book keeping did not go to suit me... Concluded not to go to school until a modern set of Bank Books were written up.”

April 17, 1876: Began writing school at P.A. Espina, $8 for one month.

April 21, 1876: Went to Odd Fellow’s entertainment at Washington Hall and danced.

May 10, 1876: Went to the California Academy of Sciences, Botanical section; given a specimen of Australian grass.

May 27, 1876: Went to Mrs. M.A. Livermore’s lecture in evening (Mary Ashton Rice Livermore, journalist and women’s rights activist)

May 29, 1876: “Mrs. Shattucks talked Sandwich Islands.”

May 31, 1876: Decided to go to the islands.

June 1-6, 1876: Preparing for trip to islands with her mother.

June 4, 1876: “Jennie, Delia, Frank, Mr. S. and I went down to the vessel... met our passengers.”

June 7, 1876: Sail for Hawaii tomorrow. “Good bye diary – for 2 mos.”

June 8-September 20, 1876: Blank - did not write in diary during her trip to Hawaii.

September 21, 1876: Returned from islands.

October 9, 1876: “Commenced school at Business College.”

October 20, 1876: “Met J.C. Moore (Fungi man).” (Justin Moore from California Academy of Sciences)

October 27, 1876: “Mrs. Jewett to theater in storm. Booth benefit night.” (Special benefit performance for actor Edwin Booth).


November 13, 1876: “Finished Business College today.”

January 1, 1877: Went to inauguration of Trolley Park.
1877 Diary, 1877 January 10-December 31

Scope and Content
Kate began classes at Berkeley in the fall of this year. She continued to live with her family in Oakland during the first half of the year; it is unclear if she moved to live near Berkeley when she started school or if she commuted from Oakland. This daily diary, similar to the previous one, chronicles the weather, her activities, social events and visits, as well as certain national and international events and school-related issues. There are much more frequent references to Kate’s interest in science and horticulture, in addition to references to her membership in the Chapter Society and her volunteering at the “Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institution” in Berkeley (now known as the California School for the Blind). Kate refers to several childhood friends, including William Clayton (an old schoolmate) whose death in October of 1877 affected her deeply. Several entries in December refer to the results of her first final exams at Berkeley.

Entries of interest:

January 19, 1877: “After lunch paid papa’s interest at bank and asked for situation (refused of course). Put $25.00 in Bank for Frank, he now has $162.82. I felt as though I wanted some in Bank too.”

January 22, 1877: “Dreamed I was getting ready in a terrible hurry for the D.C.M. on a 2nd trip to S.I.” (ship name D. Colden Murray; Sandwich Islands)

January 23, 1877: “Dreamed of being at the Islands and there meeting the owner of a hyacinth plantation in Iowa!”

January 28, 1877: “Looked through my own microscope.”

January 29, 1877: “Went to ranch in forenoon and evening to see about the milk bills – things going rather crooked.”

January 31, 1877: “Pleasant day, to ranch making out bills. Oakland with papa Florence came for gold fish. Went to ranch in horse cars, first time I ever rode in them.”

February 2, 1877: “Heard – I was to be married.”

February 5, 1877: Went to the California Academy of Sciences with specimens, consults with botanist Justin P. Moore (again February 10).

February 24, 1877: Refers to missing the Chapter Society meeting (Possibly the Oakland Chapter of the International Society for the Advancement of Art, Science and Literature, later called the Ebell Society).

March 9, 1877: “Eleven years today we came to Oakland to live on the Ranch – I now much prefer this side to the city.”

March 17, 1877: Attends opera “Around the World in 80 Days” at Wade’s Opera House. “A long play and I think anything but fine. I realize there is more pleasure than that obtained of an evening at the theater.”

March 22, 1877: “To Angell Island with Jennie and Delia and their schoolmates. A delightful ride on McPherson. A beautiful day at the Island – good luck butterflying. Visited Alcatraz and I saw canons and fort with balls etc. for the first time in my life.”

March 30, 1877: “In the evening mother Florence and I went to hear Dio Lewis lecture on “Our Girls.” The first time I heard him. Very much pleased – A good address to the Boys on Tobacco. I feel as though I wanted to know him.”

April 4, 1877: Goes to the “Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institution” (first mention).

April 7, 1877: “Lower Cal. is very dry – stock is selling very cheap and prospects of a hard season.”

April 9, 1877: “Stock struck the bedrock seemingly today—terrible condition of the market.”

April 19, 1877: “Jessie Clayton, Willie and Mrs. C. came at 11 A.M. Jessie surprised us much no one knowing she was coming. Spent a very pleasant day.”

May 4, 1877: “I read 2 chapters in “Agassiz Method of Study” (sic). Very interesting.” (Methods of Study in Natural History by Louis Agassiz)

May 8, 1877: “Mr. T. proposed finding me a situation as teacher in Russia.”

June 6, 1877: “Took a walk in the afternoon to the ridge back of camp, found a new species of fern. I only had three specimens before.”
Box-folder 1:3  

1878 Diary, 1878 January 1–December 31

Scope and Content

Another daily diary, but this has many more gaps between entries than the earlier two. Kate attended Berkeley the entire year and many of her entries are school-related. As in her earlier diaries, she continues to chronicle weather, daily activities, local and national events, and social visits. Her entries reflect a growing interest in plant and animal life, and she mentions her collection of both plant and animal specimens on several occasions.

Entries of interest:

January 7, 1878: “Finished The Story of Avis by Mrs. S. Phelps. Think it a story that tells the fate and live (sic) of thousands of girls, Florence thought I was something like Avis.”

February 23, 1878: Refers to the capture of embezzler J.C. Duncan in San Francisco. “Duncan is caught at last. He has been hiding in the city for nearly 5 months, guess they did not want to find him.”

March 16, 1878: Refers to an evening spent at the Davidsons (George Davidson, geographer). “Rest of the evening spent listening to Professor Davidson telling us and showing us his 600... pictures, photographs collected on his late tour through India and Europe on his return from Transit of Venus Expedition. Prof. Davidson is probably the most cultured and intellectual person outside the University and prob. their superior in business. He is at the head of the U.S. Coast Survey.”

March 18, 1878: Refers to order of The Naturalists’ directory by S.E. Cassino for her and members of the Brooklyn Woman’s Club.

March 28, 1878: Refers to magazine subscriptions she arranged for the club. Subscriptions included the Art Journal, New Education Woman’s Journal, Scribner’s, Littell’s Living Age, Harper’s Weekly and Monthly.

March 30, 1878: Refers to attendance at Ebell Society meeting on “Egypt, Her History, Religion and Art.”

April 1, 1878: “Found out the result of the French Ex. I led the class by large majority. I was the only one who rec’d over 90 in Examination. Term mark 100, Ex. 91. So Average 95 ½ %. My dream came true and half % over.”

July 19, 1878: “Afternoon mother and I made 5 calls in town. That is something that I do only once a year in vacation. Read for an hour in the “Life of Audubon” and it is the first good hour of reading I have had this vacation. I can imagine what miserable discontented lives must be those who live in Society for Societies sake. I enjoy company etc. but Oh how delicious is an hour of quiet to ones self.”

September 17, 1878: Refers to robbery at her family home, money and jewelry stolen.

October 26, 1878: “The Brooklyn Planing Mills and surrounding houses burnt to the ground between six and seven P.M. Mother and I drove to it. Came home, ate dinner then I took Florence and Gracie, it was the first fire I ever was at. A great many people and teams there. No noise whatever than the thumping of the Engines. It is said that everything was well insured.”

Same Day: “Will Clayton has been dead 1 year today.”

December 29, 1878: Goes to local schoolteacher Silas A. White’s home to tour his collections. He gave her several specimens. Met a Mr. Scribner at Mrs. Milbury’s who gave her the gift of a Buck Deer.

December 31, 1878: “Frank and some boys brought the Deer up from Oakland, that Mr. Scribner gave me – His name is Boba, 15 mo. old, and horns about six or seven in. long. He is quite gentle and very pretty, Likes me better than the boys.”
1879 Diary, 1879 January 1–September 25

Scope and Content
There are a number of gaps between entries in this diary also, and the entries end on September 25. This is the last diary in the collection from Kate’s college years; the next diary jumps to 1925. Kate attended Berkeley during the entire year of 1879. This daily diary chronicles the weather, school-related issues, daily activities, local and national events, and social visits. Her entries are more heavily scientific than in her earlier diaries, and she is now in some chemistry classes and has also enrolled in surveying field practice. Kate’s entries reflect a more confident, boisterous tone, talking about women’s rights, going to the gym, going camping, horseback riding and “blackberrying.” She also describes President Ulysses S. Grant’s return from his world trip and arrival in San Francisco in September.

Entries of interest:

January 5, 1879: “Spent the day at S. A. White’s. D. and I had our own time and way looking at the collection. He gave us several species of shells many minerals, and me two skulls, a beavers and a fishes jaw with real animal like teeth. The front teeth of the beaver are very long, curved and wonderful.”

January 8, 1879: “Papa testified at the Grand Jury against the thieves who stole from us last Sept. 16th.”

January 9, 1879: Results of her examinations.

January 29, 1879: “We girls got into the gym for the first time and we fairly ran wild with joy. Dancing, music... jumping, swinging, boxing – swinging clubs, fencing springing and turning somersaults. I broke my pretty comb, but have mended it for a while. Beautiful night. I am dreadfully tired.”

February 8, 1879: “Went to the city with Mrs. Hittell... Spent the night at Miss H. Saw their collections of shells, fossils curios etc. etc. They have a beautiful home, sat in the Library looking at books, pictures etc. Miss H. gave me a criticism of G. Faust written by her father. Mr. H. also wrote the life of the hunter and old Californian J.C. Adams which I had read so many times when a little girl. I saw the original manuscript.” – Referring to Theodore H. Hittell’s criticism of Goethe’s “Faust” and his book The Adventures of J.C. Adams.

February 12, 1879: “Had a gay hour in the gymnasium this P.M. 1st attempt on the horizontal bar.”

March 3, 1879: “Took up surveying with field practice today. It gives me 5 more hours per week – and where my time is coming from is more than I can tell.”

March 7, 1879: “An old witch looking character got into the street car tonight with many bundles. Jackson street gentleman got up and offered her a seat, when she said in a shrill loud tone ‘I won’t sit down.’ The car being crowded she stood almost on the platform all the way up. She was a character indeed.”

March 8, 1879: “Went from Berk. to the city with Ma... Came home on the three boat. Ran to the boat, Gentleman asked me if I was a “book agent.” We discussed ‘Womens Rights’ all the way up on the train. He certainly was a country man and has had something to do with High Schools.”

March 15, 1879: Finds out that her good friend Florence is leaving on a trip to Oregon for 6-8 weeks.

March 31, 1879: “Tom Clayton went out on the train with me to help carry the Rattlesnake. Rivers was much pleased with it and told the boys that I put it in the bottle.”

June 15, 1879: “Took a very long horse-back ride with Henry Fiske from the other camp. Rode to San Gregoria and then to the long bridge... towards Spanish Town. In all about 26 m. He staid (sic) to dinner, then walked up to the 3 M.Y.M. Camp. And returned to our camp fire, about which we sat very late and quiet. Others noisy.” (Possibly William Henry Fiske, b. 1860 in Woodland, CA)

June 16, 1879: “Teased bugged by all, I went blackberrying and was unable to get back until 7 P.M. Josie W. arrived and I was much disappointed not to meet her. Completely disgusted with being in a crowd. The Mr. Bell and Martin treated us very handsomely to dinner and cream and milk and helped gather berries.”

September 20, 1879: “At 3:10 Bells and whistles announced the sighting of the steamship Tokio from China bringing Gen. Grant, wife and party. Each stroke thrilled me, but I did not go – neither would mother let me. He did not land until 8 P.M. The procession was in hurried torch light, but it was a fine success altogether. I feel very sorry that I did not see the escorting float.”

September 25, 1879: “Today was Oakland (sic) to receive Grant and handsomely has she done it too. Viewed the grand procession from one wagon at Clay and 14th sts. Saw him
1925 Travel Journal # 1, 1925 March 3–September 5

Scope and Content

The journal includes a folded world map attached to the back inside cover (circa 1914) with international routes of steam vessels. Kate’s notes are divided into two sections. The first section covers the beginning of her trip to Europe from her departure from New York on March 3 to her travels in Italy. During this period, Kate traveled from Boston to Lisbon, Portugal then past the coast of Africa, through the Strait of Gibraltar, into and through Italy, including the cities of Pompeii, Rome and Naples. The second section of the journal covers her journey back home from the East coast, beginning August 27 through September 5, 1925. There are 3 out-of-order entries in the back of the journal dated June 4, May 22, May 28. Landmarks of significance that she passes by on this leg of her journey include the Hudson River, Saratoga Springs, New York and Lake Champlain. The majority of the notes in the journal are incredibly detailed descriptions of the landscape and vegetation of the different areas she travels through, including the names of specific plant and tree species. Some of her notes are hard to decipher since they seem to have been scrawled quickly as personal references to herself. The journal includes several sketches that Kate did of different geographic landmarks, as well as one dried plant specimen pressed between pages of the journal (encapsulated and in Box 1, folder 6).

Entries of interest:


March 5, 1925: Describes the people at her dining table: 2 Italians, 3 Americans, all men. She is the only woman.

March 13, 1925: Anchored off Lisbon, went ashore. “The Estrella Park was greatly enjoyed—showed plants identical with the best in San Diego.” She met the superintendent of the nursery, a 70-year-old man who wrote out his address for her.

March 14, 1925: They travel past the African coast and through the Strait of Gibraltar. She includes several sketches of Gibraltar and the African coastline.

March 23, 1925: She boards the train to Pompeii.

March 27, 1925: She travels from Naples to Rome. She describes the scene from the train: a plain on one side, forest on the other. Due to deforestation, the plain widens and the forest recedes as they travel towards Rome.

August 27–September 5, 1925 (many entries undated): Notes on landscape, vegetation, and specific plant species as she travels through the American Northwest. She mentions and describes the Hudson River, Saratoga Springs, and Lake Champlain.

August 30, 1925: “Have enjoyed reading and completing Henry Fink’s book on ‘Girth Control.’ A book on intelligent diet.” (Girth Control, for womanly beauty, manly strength, health and a long life for everybody by Henry Theophilus Fink, 1923)

June 4, 1925: Travels from London to Cornwall, England. Mentions many people she visited and met including Mrs. McLaren and J.C. Williams. Williams and his cousin are daffodil experts and showed her their collection, as well as Williams’ estate and collection of Rhododendrons and azaleas. Discuss cultivation and hybridization.

May 22, 1925: Trip with Garden Club to Dr. Fox’s country estate. Lists plant names from garden.

May 28, 1925: Visits Physic Gardens in Chelsea, London with Lady Harris and Miss St. Claire. Lists many plant names from garden.

Pressed plant specimens from 1925 travel journal # 1, undated

1925 Travel notes, 1925 March 24-26

Scope and Content

This unbound journal includes travel notes and sketches similar to those found in the previous journal, chronicling travels and detailing landscape, vegetation and plant names. It details travels in Cava, Italy and the Salerno region, and includes many sketches.
1925 Travel Journal # 2, 1925 June 30-July 2

Scope and Content
This journal primarily includes notes taken at Westminster Abbey in London. Kate lists in minute detail names, places, items, and historical information from her visit to Westminster. Description of items that appear to be in a museum. As in the previous journals, many of her notes are hard to decipher since they seem to have been scrawled quickly as personal references to herself. Also contained one dried plant specimen pressed between pages of the journal (encapsulated and in Box 1, folder 9).

Entries of interest:
June 30, 1925 Description of the Valley of Seine in France. Lists many scientific plant names from the area.
July 1, 1925: Winchester College. Description of landscape and vegetation, plant names.
July 2, 1925: Enroute to Paris.

Pressed plant specimens from 1925 travel journal # 2, undated

1925 Travel Journal # 3, 1925 July 3-July 18 and undated

Scope and Content
This journal includes notes from Kate’s travels through Switzerland and Italy. As in her other journals, many of the notes are on landscape, vegetation and plant names, but they also detail her travel route and describe the different cities she travels through. This journal also includes several sketches and three dried plant specimens pressed between pages of the journal (encapsulated and in Box 1, folder 11). Some of her notes are hard to decipher. The majority of the travelling Kate did during this period was part of a group trip from California that she joined, accompanying Mrs. and Miss Cattern, her acquaintances, through Switzerland and part of Italy (See letter from William O. Wark in Box 2, folder 1 dated May 20, 1925 for more information). There are several undated loose receipts and train tickets in the back of the journal. Since the majority of the notes are detailed descriptions of landscape and vegetation, there are not many entries of interest, besides those detailing Kate’s travel route.

Entries of interest:
Undated (most likely July 4): Describes arrival at Strasbour Station. “A great crowd at station – some flags and some demonstration - women in costume.” Meets up with Mrs. and Miss Cattern at the hotel in the evening.
July 8, 1925: Describes Rhone Glacier and River, and town of Gleitsch. Continues trip by auto to Interlaken via Grimsel pass. Lists scientific plant names.
July 10, 1925: Leaves Interlaken, travels by train through Switzerland. Describes landscape and countryside as viewed from the train.
July 11, 1925: At Montreux on Lake Geneva. Travel by train to Geneva. “seems strange to see such verdure and growth and beauty right to the very water’s edge – but the water is sweet. Rains abundant and snow’s rejuvenating!” Long description of vegetation and list of plant names.

Pressed plant specimens from 1925 travel journal # 3, undated
1925 Travel Journal # 4, 1925 July 19-29

Scope and Content
This journal includes travel notes and sketches similar to those found in the previous journals, chronicling travels and detailing landscape, vegetation and plant names. It chronicles travel from Lake Lugano to Lake Como, Venice, and Bolzano, Italy.

Entries of interest:
Sketched portrait pasted to front of book, possibly a sketch of Kate.
July 19, 1925: Sailing on Lake Lugano. “Really a heavenly trip – always to be remembered.” Describes a funicular on the side of the mountain. Writes of 3rd class (on train): “has no upholstered seats, no carpeted floors – cleaner I think.” Passes Colegio S. Ambrosio.
July 20, 1925: Describes Villa Carlota, “a beautiful day, a lovely trip and most enjoyable at Villa Carlota.”
July 22, 1925: In Venice. “The trip was oppressively hot from Milan to Venice – and the hotel crowded.” “These Sts would make an excellent Maize (sic) for those inclined to solve puzzles, etc.”
July 25, 1925: Leaving Venice. Travels to “Lake Ledo” (Lake Ledro?). Notes terraces, hillside gardens, and the cultivation of tobacco.
Notes in back: Recording money spent, places stayed, modes of travel.

1925 Travel Journal # 5, 1925 July 30–August 7 and undated

Scope and Content
This journal continues where Journal # 4 left off in Kate’s Europe trip. Kate begins in Bolzano, Italy, travels to Germany, stopping at Munich, Nuremberg, and Frankfurt, then returns to Paris for the Paris Exposition (known as the International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts). As in her other journals, many of the notes are on landscape, vegetation and plant names, but they also chronicle Kate’s travel route and describe the different cities she travels through. There are several sketches in this journal as well.

Entries of interest:
July 30, 1925: She admires the jewelry in town but notes its price: “very attractive work but not very cheap.” “There is need of a cheap handbook with the excursion... Also a simple map of this region and adjacent regions. Nothing to be had.” Travels into Austria on train. “Here it is Austria and man goes thru train to look at passports.”
Undated (most likely July 31): In Munich, goes to gallery. Describes the work and paintings of different artists in great detail. Artists of note include Van Dyck and Rembrandt.
August 1, 1925: In Munich. “German signs and advice by police men very hard to understand or read. Strangers come to my rescue—very kindly.”
August 3, 1925: In Nuremberg, “to zoo garden said to be best in Ger.” Describes animals and plants in great detail. “A big row of community gardens not 10 min. from city’s center.”
August 4, 1925: Lists books to read: From a College Window and Upton Letters by A.C. Benson. “At my age I have learned to take what comes now, may not be another chance - Helped much in the war.” “What's the good of worrying / It never was worthwhile / Pack up your troubles / in your old kit bag / and smile, smile, smile.” “Story – 'Why do you ride 3rd class? Said they to the Ecclesiastical – I am surprised.' ‘Because there is no 4th class’ his answer.”
August 6, 1925: Arrives in Paris at 8pm.
August 7, 1925: Attends Paris Expo. Detailed description and sketches of gardens, architecture, fountains, pool. Also lists names of manufacturing companies of dishes, vases, pottery, etc. Describes different displays including curtains, bead ornaments, fans, etc.
Back of journal: Names and addresses of individuals she met on her trip.
1925 Travel Journal # 6, 1925 June 28, August 9-13 and undated

Scope and Content
A much less organized journal with many undated notes. There is one entry from June, and the rest begin on August 9. On the inside front cover, Kate lists William Robinsons, Luxembourg and Vilmorin. It appears that the initial entries dated June 28 are notes from her visit to William Robinson’s garden in England (Gravetye Manor in Sussex). There are numerous pages of lists of scientific plant names. The August entries are from her visits to Luxembourg Gardens in Paris and the Vilmorin-Andreux nursery outside of Paris. The last entries are from several museums that Kate visited in Paris.

Entries of interest:
June 28, 1925: England, Mr. William Robinson’s garden. Lists scientific plant names.
August 9-11, 1925: To Pantheon and church St. Etienne. Then to Luxembourg, lists plant names.
August 11, 1925: At Vilmorin museum, then gardens. Lists plant names.
August 12, 1925: Goes to the Museum of Rodin with Mrs. and Miss Sweet, then to the Tombs of Napoleon.
August 13, 1925: Goes to the Louvre – free entry. Detailed notes on museum, then on gardens.
Second-to-last page: Info. on shipping packages home.
Back inside cover: Calculations on travel costs.

Series II: Correspondence

Box-folder 1:15  Europe letters: Alice M. Rainford, 1925 April 4–June 28
Box-folder 1:16  Europe letters: Mrs. Miles, 1925 April 25–July 31
Box-folder 2:1  Europe letters: miscellanea, 1925 March 16–September 5 and undated

Includes:
Letter from William O. Wark to Sessions regarding joining his group trip to Switzerland beginning July 4, 1925, dated May 20, 1925.

Box-folder 2:2  San Diego letters, 1886 September 30–1940 February 9 and undated

Includes:
Note informing of Sessions’ election as a member of the American Forestry Association, January 24, 1928.
Letter informing of Sessions’ election as a fellow of the San Diego Society of Natural History, March 22, 1929.
Correspondence with William H. Judd from Harvard University’s Arnold Arboretum, June 18, 1933.
Correspondence with the director of the National Botanic Gardens, Kirstenbosch, Newlands, November 4, 1936.

Box-folder 2:3  Miscellanea, 1909 September–1940 January 2 and undated

Includes:
Announcement of A.M. Rainford’s assumption of ownership of the Retail Cut Flower business (previously owned by Sessions), September 1909.
Letter from Max Matousek to Julius Wangenheim regarding the purchase of Sessions’ nursery, January 2, 1940.
Letter from Alice Carroll recalling Sessions’ reaction to receiving the Meyer Medal, whose ceremony she attended with Carroll, undated.

Series III: Scrapbooks
Series III: Scrapbooks

Box-folder 2:4
Scrapbook compiled by Alice Carroll, 1888 December–1932 May 29
Includes:
Two photographs of Kate Sessions and others.

Box-folder 2:5
Pacific International Exposition Scrapbook (compiled by A. Carroll), 1935 January 4-1939 August
Includes:
Eight photographs of Kate Sessions and others.

Series IV: Manuscripts and Articles

Box-folder 2:6
Frechette research notes and unpublished manuscript, 1938 May 17-1940 May 18
Includes:
Correspondence between Frechette and Alice Carroll following Sessions’ death, May 18, 1940.

Box-folder 2:7
Typed transcription of “Letters from Europe,” 1925 February 21-August 18

Box-folder 2:8
Published articles on Kate Sessions, 1943 December–1980 June and undated
Includes:
“Kate Olivia Sessions and California Floriculture” by T.D.A. Cockerell, December 1943.

Series V: Miscellanea

Box-folder Oversize Collections D4
Oakland High School diploma, 1875 May 28

Box-folder 3:1
Book: "Flowering Plants and Ferns: Cambridge Biological Series” (1931), 1931, 1932 January, 1940 May
Includes:
Later inscription: “Selected for Alfred from Kate Sessions library. Tom McMullen May 1940.” (Thomas F. McMullen worked for Milton Sessions Landscape Design Co. for many years)

Box-folder 3:2
Book: "Dollikin Dutch And How She Helped Piet and Nella" by Ernest Aris (1909), 1909, 1910
Includes:
Inscription: “For Fern. Xmas 1910, From Miss Sessions” (Fern Vickery, daughter of Thos D. Vickery, foreman at Sessions nursery)