Finding aid of the Isabel Percy West Reminiscences C058790

Finding aid prepared by Catherine Coffman
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06/06/2007
Title: West, Isabel Percy Reminiscences
Identifier/Call Number: C058790
Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Language of Material: English
Storage Unit: B001651
Storage Unit: C058790
Physical Description: 1.0 folder (1 unbound typed manuscript. 143 pages.)
Date: ca. 1923
Abstract: This manuscript was written by Isabel West and covers San Francisco history from the years 1853 to 1915. She combines personal experiences and memories with discussions of the development and changes in San Francisco, particularly the area around one particular building where she once had a studio — Montgomery Block. This building was built by Henry Wager Halleck whose goal was to create a building that was indestructible—which it proved to be miraculously surviving the 1906 earthquake and fires. In Part I of the manuscript West writes about the creation of neighborhoods such as Chinatown and Nob Hill and describes the cultural melting pot that was created in San Francisco from the very beginning. She then goes on to tell of the 1906 earthquake, telling the story through the perspective of Montgomery Block’s manager Oliver Perry Stidger. The Bank Exchange and its popularity and function in SF social life are also heavily discussed. Part II focuses on the neighborhood around Montgomery Block and the Panama Pacific International Exhibition of 1915. She also writes about her friends and colleagues in the California Society of Etchers. The final section focuses on prohibition and its affect of the café life that was critical to San Francisco culture. She places particular emphasis on the Black Cat Café and the group of artists that gathered there including Robert Aitkin, Perry Newbury, and Mary Austin.
creator: West, Isabel Clark Percy, 1882-1976
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for research.
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions on access.
Preferred Citation note
Isabel Perry West Reminiscences. The Society of California Pioneers.
Donor
Isabel Perry West, date unknown.
Biographical/Historical note
Isabel Clark Percy was born in 1882 in Alameda, daughter of prominent San Francisco architect George W. Percy. She married newspaper editor George West in 1916. She was a painter, lithographer, and etcher and confounded the California College of Arts and Crafts and taught there for several decades. She lived in Sausalito with her husband until her death in 1976.
Scope and Contents note
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Handwritten edits are done throughout the typed manuscript.
Existence and Location of Originals note
The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA, 94107.

**Related Archival Materials note**
Biographical File - Newspaper Obituary for Isabel West (1976).

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Aitken, Robert Ingersoll, 1878-1849
Halleck, H.W. (Henry Wager), 1815-1872
Stidger, Oliver Perry, b. 1873
Bank Exchange (San Francisco, Calif.)
California Midwinter International Exposition (1894 : San Francisco, Calif.)
California Society of Etchers
California, Northern-History-19th century.
Panama-Pacific International Exposition (1915 : San Francisco, Calif.)
San Francisco (Calif.)
San Francisco (Calif.).--Social life and customs
San Francisco Bay Area (Calif.).--History
San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, Calif., 1906
San Francisco. Montgomery Block.