
Guide to the Genevieve Didion papers

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Guide to the Genevieve Didion papers

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Sacramento, CA

Processed by:

Jessica Knox

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Sean Heyliger

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Genevieve Didion papers

Dates: 1918-1973

Bulk Dates: 1938-1950

Collection number: MS0027

Creator: Didion, Genevieve

Creator: Native Daughters of the Golden West

Collection Size: 3.5 linear feet(7 boxes)

Repository: Center for Sacramento History

Sacramento, California 95811-0229

Abstract: The Genevieve Didion Papers are comprised of 3.5 cubic feet of textual and photographic material, bound volumes, and artifacts and ephemera chronicling the life of Genevieve Didion, a Sacramento woman involved in the preservation of local and state history and the improvement of education and youth services. The collection documents her work from 1918-1973 as part of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, the Sacramento Board of Education, and other local efforts related to history and education.

Physical location: 30J5, MC 11:06, MC 15:03

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

Collection is open for research use.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Genevieve Didion papers , MS0027, Center for Sacramento History.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Mary Armstrong Didion to the Center for Sacramento History in 1984

Processing Information

Genevieve Didion Papers processed by Jessica Knox, 2009. Finding Aid prepared by Jessica Knox.

Biography / Administrative History

Genevieve Didion was born in 1897 in the Sacramento Valley, where her family had settled in the late 1800s. Raised in a pioneer family, Genevieve Didion strove to preserve the pioneer heritage of Sacramento. Throughout her life she was instrumental in documenting and celebrating the city's history, and dedicated herself to improving education and providing opportunities for Sacramento's youth. Genevieve Didion was an active member of the Sacramento Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, a statewide organization dedicated to reverence of California's pioneers and preservation of

the state's history. As a member of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, Genevieve Didion spearheaded local efforts to plant memorial groves in memory of California's pioneers. She succeeded in establishing the Camellia Grove on the Grounds of the State Capitol, as well as other memorial groves planted on the grounds of the California State Fair, McClellan and Mather Air Force Bases, and Sutter's Fort. Genevieve Didion coordinated social and celebratory events for the Sacramento Parlor, including the Centennial Breakfast at Sutter's Fort, the Gold Centennial Ball, and Admissions' Day parades. She also assisted in the creation of the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West Children's Foundation, a statewide charitable organization to aid handicapped children not supported by welfare. Other projects to preserve California's history interested Genevieve Didion as well. She undertook legislative work in order to have Admissions' Day declared a state holiday, and to secure "I Love You, California" as the official state song. She lobbied for the passage of legislation to require the state flag to be flown with the American flag over all public buildings in California. In addition to her work to celebrate state history, Genevieve Didion was dedicated to preserving local history. She was active in the Sacramento County Historical Society, and served as a member of the Sophie Comstock Memorial Commission, which coordinated the installation of a memorial to the Pony Express at 2nd and J Streets in downtown Sacramento. For these activities she was recognized by the Grand Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, and in 1961 received the Woman of the Year award from the Soroptimist Club of Sacramento. The youth of Sacramento were also of great interest and importance to Genevieve Didion. She established and acted as director of the Youth Services Center and the Eaglet Theater for Children. She served as the president of the Sacramento Children's Receiving Home. For three gubernatorial administrations, Genevieve Didion served as a member of the Governor's Youth Conference Committee. She actively supported the Girl Scouts of America. She also functioned as a member of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission, helping to coordinate positive activities for young adults. Genevieve Didion was also devoted to improving education in Sacramento schools. She was first appointed to the Sacramento Board of Education in 1942, and served until 1960, when the Board became elective. Voters promptly returned her to her post, where she remained until her death in 1974 at age 77.

Scope and Content of Collection

The first series, Native Daughters of the Golden West, reflects Genevieve Didion's activities in the Sacramento parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, a statewide organization dedicated to the preservation of California's history. The series consists of twenty-one file folders and one bound volume spanning the time period 1926-1961, and includes material such as correspondence, news clippings, reports, financial records, notes, speech transcripts, and proceedings of the Sacramento parlor. Many of Genevieve Didion's efforts as part of the Native Daughters of the Golden West paid tribute to California's pioneers. Genevieve Didion was instrumental in organizing the planting of the Camellia Grove, a living pioneer memorial, on the grounds of the State Capitol in 1942. She also helped to coordinate events such as the annual Admission's Day Parade in downtown Sacramento, the Centennial Breakfast at Sutter's Fort, and the Native Daughters of the Golden West Gold Discovery Ball.

The second series, Correspondence, is arranged into two subseries: J.F. Didion Correspondence and Genevieve Didion Correspondence. The first subseries, J.F. Didion Correspondence, consists of four file folders of material regarding the activities of J.F. Didion, Genevieve Didion's husband, in the Sacramento Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West from 1930-1932. The second subseries, Genevieve Didion Correspondence, consists of two file folders of personal correspondence covering the period 1926-1957, primarily comprised of thank-you notes from members of the Sacramento parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West.

The third series, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission, relates to Genevieve Didion's involvement with the Sacramento County Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission. The Commission, established by county ordinance in 1965, functioned as a means to coordinate the activities of governmental and nongovernmental organizations working to prevent juvenile delinquency. The series consists of one file folder of material from 1972-1973, which includes correspondence and resolutions of the Commission, meeting minutes, organization charts, and information about Commission membership.

The fourth series, Sophie Comstock Memorial Commission, consists of one file folder chronicling Genevieve Didion's membership on the Sophie Comstock Memorial Commission. The Sacramento City Council appointed a 20 member commission in 1961 to oversee the development of a tribute to the Pony Express, funded by a bequest from Sacramento resident Sophie Pleasants Comstock. Comstock was a local horse enthusiast who passed away in 1915. Genevieve Didion played an active role on the Commission, which worked to raise funds, secured land for the memorial, and oversaw the development of the statue. The file contains correspondence and other material related to the Commission, ranging in date from 1960-1973. The file includes several sketches of the Pony Express statue.

The fifth series, Sacramento City and County Youth Services Committee, is made up of one file folder of material reflecting Genevieve Didion's participation on the committee from 1948-1949. The committee implemented positive programs for children and young adults, and encouraged parental involvement. The file includes committee and program budgets,

committee meeting minutes, day camp programs and brochures, and information on proposed projects and suggested family activities.

The sixth series, Sacramento Children's Receiving Home, includes two file folders documenting Genevieve Didion's three year term as Director of the Receiving Home, from 1944-1947. The files contain correspondence, news clippings, brochures, reports, and lists regarding the daily operations of the Receiving Home. Also included is a check register dating from 1918-1923, detailing the Receiving Home's regular purchases, like groceries and other goods.

The seventh series, Sacramento Board of Education, consists of one bound volume and three file folders of notes, correspondence and campaign material relating to Genevieve Didion's membership on the Sacramento Board of Education. She was first appointed to the Board in 1942 by the Sacramento City Council, and served for eighteen years before the board became elective in 1960. She was promptly elected, and continued to serve until her death in 1974. While a member of the Board, she served three terms as president and succeeded in making California State University, Sacramento into a four-year university. Some material of note includes correspondence relating to CSU Sacramento, and a bound volume from the Jefferson Parent-Teacher Association. The series also contains ephemera, including bumper stickers from Genevieve Didion's 1960 campaign, and a rubbing from Edward Kelley School presented to her in 1972. Ephemera are located at MC 15:03.

The eighth series, Printed Material, is comprised of eight file folders of published material collected by Genevieve Didion, the majority of which reflects her interest in the history of California. The publications range in date from 1933-1963. The files include issues of the official Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West publication the Grizzly Bear, numerous issues of the California Herald, material related to Sacramento's schools, various handbooks on education, childcare, and housekeeping, and a significant amount of sheet music documenting California folk songs.

The ninth series, Photographs, consists of black and white photographs documenting Genevieve Didion's activities in Sacramento from 1936-1963. The majority of the photographs are undated. Many photographs depict the dedication of the Camellia Grove at the State Capitol in 1942, and the individuals who came to plant camellias in memory of their pioneer ancestors. Photographs of other memorial groves planted by Genevieve Didion and the Native Daughters of the Golden West at the State Fair Grounds, McClellan and Mather Air Force Bases, and Sutter's Fort are also present. Other photographs document various events sponsored by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, such as the Centennial Breakfast held at Sutter's Fort, Admissions Day festivities, and the Gold Discovery Ball. Oversized photographs are located at MC 11:06.

The tenth series, Artifacts and Ephemera, contains many items related to Genevieve Didion's activities as part of the Native Daughters of the Golden West and her involvement in local schools, dating from 1941-1960. Included are various ribbons and name badges from Native Daughters of the Golden West events, Sacramento County pet tags, a "Capital Bowl" pencil, and booklets and ribbons relating to Genevieve Didion's husband, J.F. Didion, and his activities as County Tax Collector and employee of the Capital National Bank of Sacramento. Most notable within the series are several LP records produced by the Sacramento Senior High School Dance Band between 1944-1960.

Arrangement

Series 1. Native Daughters of the Golden West Series 2. Correspondence Series 3. Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission Series 4. Sophie Comstock Memorial Commission Series 5. Sacramento City and County Youth Services Committee Series 6. Sacramento Children's Receiving Home Series 7. Sacramento Board of Education Series 8. Printed material Series 9. Photographs Series 10. Artifacts and ephemera

Indexing Terms

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

Native Daughters of the Golden West

Sacramento (Calif.)--History

Flo Barton Smith, "1961 Women of the Year," The Sacramento Bee, May 28, 1961, p.CW1.

"Mrs. Didion, School Board Member, Dies," The Sacramento Bee, March 15, 1974, p.B1.

Series 1. Native Daughters of the Golden West

Physical Description: 21 folders + 1 volume

Series Scope and Content Summary

The Native Daughters of the Golden West series reflects Genevieve Didion's activities in the Sacramento parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, a statewide organization dedicated to the preservation of California's history. The series consists of twenty-one file folders and one bound volume spanning the time period 1926-1961, and includes material such as correspondence, news clippings, reports, financial records, notes, speech transcripts, and proceedings of the Sacramento parlor. Many of Genevieve Didion's efforts as part of the Native Daughters of the Golden West paid tribute to California's pioneers. Genevieve Didion was instrumental in organizing the planting of the Camellia Grove, a living pioneer memorial, on the grounds of the State Capitol in 1942. She also helped to coordinate events such as the annual Admission's Day Parade in downtown Sacramento, the Centennial Breakfast at Sutter's Fort, and the Native Daughters of the Golden West Gold Discovery Ball.

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|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 1:1 | Admissions Day 1948 |
| Box 1:2 | Camellia Grove dedication 1942 |
| Box 1:3 | Centennial Committee of the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce 1947-1948 |
| Box 1:4 | Civic reports 1938-1950 |
| Box 1:5-6 | Correspondence 1939-1961 |
| Box 1:7 | Financial records 1948 |
| Box 1:8-9 | Gold Discovery Ball 1948 |
| Box 2:1-2 | Grand Parlor 1948 |
| Box 2:3-4 | Joseph R. Knowland Reception 1951 |
| Box 2:5 | Pioneer Memorial Grove Committee 1940 |
| Box 2:6-7 | Proceedings of the Grand Parlor 1935-1937 |
| Box 3:1-2 | Proceedings of the Grand Parlor 1938-1939 |
| Box 3:3 | Speeches and background material 1943-1950 |
| Box 3:4 | Sutter's Fort Centennial Breakfast 1947 |
| Box 3:5 | Treasurer's book 1926 |
| Box 3:6 | Weekly receipts volume 1946-1958 |

Series 2. Correspondence

Physical Description: 6 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary

The correspondence series is arranged into two subseries: J.F. Didion Correspondence and Genevieve Didion Correspondence. The first subseries, J.F. Didion Correspondence, consists of four file folders of material regarding the activities of J.F. Didion, Genevieve Didion's husband, in the Sacramento Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West from 1930-1932. The second subseries, Genevieve Didion Correspondence, consists of two file folders of personal correspondence covering the period 1926-1957, primarily comprised of thank-you notes from members of the Sacramento parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West.

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- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 3:7-8 | Subseries 2.1 Genevieve Didion correspondence 1926-1957 |
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- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 4:1-4 | Subseries 2.2 J.F. Didion correspondence 1928-1945 |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|

Box 4:5

Series 3. Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission 1972-1973

Physical Description: 1 folder

Series Scope and Content Summary

The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission series relates to Genevieve Didion's involvement with the Sacramento County Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission. The Commission, established by county ordinance in 1965, functioned as a means to coordinate the activities of governmental and nongovernmental organizations working to prevent juvenile delinquency. The series consists of one file folder of material from 1972-1973, which includes correspondence and resolutions of the Commission, meeting minutes, organization charts, and information about Commission membership.

Box 4:6

Series 4. Sophie Comstock Memorial Commission 1960-1973

Physical Description: 1 folder

Series Scope and Content Summary

The Sophie Comstock Memorial Commission series consists of one file folder chronicling Genevieve Didion's membership on the Sophie Comstock Memorial Commission. The Sacramento City Council appointed a 20 member commission in 1961 to oversee the development of a tribute to the Pony Express, funded by a bequest from Sacramento resident Sophie Pleasants Comstock. Comstock was a local horse enthusiast who passed away in 1915. Genevieve Didion played an active role on the Commission, which worked to raise funds, secured land for the memorial, and oversaw the development of the statue. The file contains correspondence and other material related to the Commission, ranging in date from 1960-1973. The file includes several sketches of the Pony Express statue.

Box 4:7

Series 5. Sacramento City and County Youth Services Committee 1948-1949

Physical Description: 1 folder

Series Scope and Content Summary

The Sacramento City and County Youth Services Committee series is made up of one file folder of material reflecting Genevieve Didion's participation on the committee from 1948-1949. The committee implemented positive programs for children and young adults, and encouraged parental involvement. The file includes committee and program budgets, committee meeting minutes, day camp programs and brochures, and information on proposed projects and suggested family activities.

Series 6. Sacramento Children's Receiving Home

Physical Description: 2 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary

The Sacramento Children's Receiving Home series includes two file folders documenting Genevieve Didion's three year term as Director of the Receiving Home, from 1944-1947. The files contain correspondence, news clippings, brochures, reports, and lists regarding the daily operations of the Receiving Home. Also included is a check register dating from 1918-1923, detailing the Receiving Home's regular purchases, like groceries and other goods.

Box 5:1

Check register 1918-1923

Box 5:2

Correspondence 1944-1948

Series 7. Sacramento Board of Education

Physical Description: 3 folders + 1 bound volume

Series Scope and Content Summary

The Sacramento Board of Education series consists of one bound volume and three file folders of notes, correspondence and campaign material relating to Genevieve Didion's membership on the Sacramento Board of Education. She was first appointed to the Board in 1942 by the Sacramento City Council, and served for eighteen years before the board became elective in 1960. She was promptly elected, and continued to serve until her death in 1974. While a member of the Board, she served three terms as president and succeeded in making California State University, Sacramento into a four-year university. Some material of note includes correspondence relating to CSU Sacramento, and a bound volume from the Jefferson Parent-Teacher Association. The series also contains ephemera, including bumper stickers from Genevieve Didion's 1960 campaign, and a rubbing from Edward Kelley School presented to her in 1972. Ephemera are located at MC 15:03.

Box 5:3-4
 Box 5:5
 Box 5:6

Correspondence 1938-1964

Campaign material 1967

Jefferson Parent-Teacher Association bound volume 1941-1942

Series 8. Printed material

Physical Description: 8 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary

The eighth series, Printed material, is comprised of eight file folders of published material collected by Genevieve Didion, the majority of which reflects her interest in the history of California. The publications range in date from 1933-1963. The files include issues of the official Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West publication the Grizzly Bear, numerous issues of the California Herald, material related to Sacramento's schools, various handbooks on education, childcare, and housekeeping, and a significant amount of sheet music documenting California folk songs.

Box 6:1
 Box 6:2
 Box 6:3
 Box 6:4
 Box 6:5
 Box 6:6
 Box 6:7
 Box 6:8

California Centennials newsletter 1948-1950

California Herald 1962-1963

The Grizzly Bear 1933-1953

Historical resources 1933-1950

Homemaking publications 1933-1956

Sacramento City Public Schools News 1948-1950

Sacramento schools 1949-1957

Sheet music undated

Series 9. Photographs

Physical Description: 9 folders

Series Scope and Content Summary

The ninth series, Photographs, consists of black and white photographs documenting Genevieve Didion's activities in Sacramento from 1936-1963. The majority of the photographs are undated. Many photographs depict the dedication of the Camellia Grove at the State Capitol in 1942, and the individuals who came to plant camellias in memory of their pioneer ancestors. Photographs of other memorial groves planted by Genevieve Didion and the Native Daughters of the Golden West at the State Fair Grounds, McClellan and Mather Air Force Bases, and Sutter's Fort are also present. Other photographs document various events sponsored by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, such as the Centennial Breakfast held at Sutter's Fort, Admissions Day festivities, and the Gold Discovery Ball. Oversized photographs are located at MC 11:06.

Box 7
 Box 7
 Box 7
 Box 7
 Box 7

Camellia Grove Dedication 1942-1956

Elementary School dedication undated

Gold Discovery Ball 1948

Mather Field ceremonies undated

Native Daughters of the Golden West - miscellaneous events undated

Box 7

Pony Express marker dedication 1936

Box 7

Separated photographs undated

Box 7

Sutter's Fort events 1936-1950

Box 7

Young America Engine Co. No. 6 dedication 1963

Box unknown

Series 10. Artifacts and ephemera

Series Scope and Content Summary

The tenth series, Artifacts and Ephemera, contains many items related to Genevieve Didion's activities as part of the Native Daughters of the Golden West and her involvement in local schools, dating from 1941-1960. Included are various ribbons and name badges from Native Daughters of the Golden West events, Sacramento County pet tags, a "Capital Bowl" pencil, and booklets and ribbons relating to Genevieve Didion's husband, J.F. Didion, and his activities as County Tax Collector and employee of the Capital National Bank of Sacramento. Most notable within the series are several LP records produced by the Sacramento Senior High School Dance Band between 1944-1960.