Guide to the Samuel and Alice L. Armor papers MS.R.012


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Note
History--California History--Los Angeles Area HistoryGeographical (By Place)--California--Los Angeles Area
Abstract: The papers of Samuel and his wife Alice L. Armor of Orange, California include incoming letters and postcards, miscellaneous Orange County ephemera, photographs of family and friends, and essays by Samuel on topics such as flood control and politics. Also included are a history of the First Presbyterian Church of Orange, California, of which the Armors were members, and an oversized city plan in manuscript, ca. 1900, of portions of the cities of Orange and Santa Ana.

Language of Material: English

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

For the benefit of current and future researchers, please cite any additional information about sources consulted in this collection, including permanent URLs, item or folder descriptions, and box/folder locations.

Acquisition Information
The Armor papers were acquired with the Don Meadows Papers, MS-R01, in Spring 1973. They were identified as a discrete collection of personal papers and separated from the larger collection in April 1996.

Processing History
Processed by Mary Ellen Goddard, 1999.

Biography
Samuel and Alice Armor played an important part in the early history of Orange County, California. Samuel was one of the original Orange County supervisors, served on a number of organizations’ boards of directors, and also edited two editions of the first major history of Orange County in 1911 and 1921. Alice Armor owned and edited the Orange Post newspaper from 1890 to 1915.

Samuel Armor was born in Essex County, New York on March 20, 1843. In 1854 he and his family moved to Iowa. In 1861 he moved to Illinois, where he attended high school in Kewanee. In the spring of 1865 Samuel and other classmates enlisted in the Ninth Illinois Cavalry and served in the Civil War. He was discharged in September at the end of the war and began classes at Knox Academy and College in Galesburg, Illinois. He transferred to Oberlin College in Ohio in his freshman year and graduated from there in 1871, having paid his way by working odd jobs as well as teaching school. Also in 1871, he married Alice L. Taylor.

After Samuel and Alice married, they taught at Indian schools in Minnesota and Dakota until the failure of his health made it necessary to move to California in 1874. After a year in Los Angeles, the couple moved to Orange.

For several years after moving to California Samuel worked at outdoor jobs, both as a carpenter and on the improvement of thirteen acres of his own land on North Main Street in the city of Orange; he sold this property in 1881. He taught school for several years in Orange and then clerked for W.B. Forsythe before starting his own book and stationary store. Later he also sold shoes in this store. Shortly after being elected as one of the first Orange County Supervisors in 1889, he closed the store and never reopened it.

Samuel was reelected supervisor three times, serving for nearly ten years. In 1892 he was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors of the Santa Ana Valley Irrigation Company. He served this organization for thirteen years, ten of them as president. In 1900 he was elected a member of the Board of Trustees of Orange Township and served in this capacity for eight years, two of them as president. Later in life Armor served several terms as a justice of the peace. He also was an associate editor of the Orange Post during the time his wife Alice owned it. In 1911 he edited the History of Orange County, a second edition of which was published in 1921. Samuel Armor died on April 1, 1933.
Alice L. Taylor was born August 20, 1848 in Stockholm, New York. When she was three years old the family moved to Ohio, where her father was pastor of the Congregational Church. She and a sister attended the Lake Erie Female Seminary at Painesville, Ohio. In 1865 Alice moved to Iowa and taught for two years in country schools. Soon thereafter, as an employee of the American Missionary Association, she taught in black schools in Lexington, Kentucky. In 1867 she entered Oberlin College, teaching to pay her way, and graduated in 1871.

Following her marriage to Samuel Armor in 1871, Alice taught school with her husband in Minnesota, the Dakota Territory, and in California in Orange, Garden Grove, and Tustin. In 1890 she gave up teaching and became an editor for the Orange Post. Mrs. Armor bought the paper in 1892, serving as editor and publisher until she sold it in 1915. During that time she was one of five women in the area involved in running newspapers. After selling the paper, she devoted her time to volunteer work with the Presbyterian Church, King’s Daughters and Women’s Relief Corps. Alice Armor died on September 13, 1939.

1843  Samuel Armor born.
1848  Alice Taylor born.
1865  Samuel enlists in Ninth Illinois Cavalry, served in the Civil War, and was discharged at end of war. He begins classes at Knox Academy and College in Galesburg, Illinois.
1866  Samuel transfers to Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.
1867  Alice enters Oberlin College.
1871  Samuel and Alice graduate from Oberlin College and are married.
1874  The Armors move to Los Angeles, California.
1875  The Armors move to Orange, California.
1889  Samuel elected Orange County Supervisor.
1892  Samuel appointed to the board of Santa Ana Valley Irrigation Company.
1892  Orange Post
1900  Samuel elected to board of trustees of Orange Township.
1911  History of Orange County
1915  Orange Post
1921  History of Orange County
1933  Samuel dies.
1939  Alice dies.

Collection Scope and Content Summary
The papers of Samuel and his wife Alice L. Armor of Orange, California include incoming letters and postcards, miscellaneous Orange County ephemera, photographs of family and friends, and essays by Samuel on topics such as flood control and politics. Also included are a history of the First Presbyterian Church of Orange, California, of which the Armors were members, and an oversized plat map in manuscript, ca. 1900, of portions of the cities of Orange and Santa Ana.

The collection has been organized into four series:
Series 1. Correspondence, 1898-1938. 0.2 linear ft.
Series 2. Orange County materials, 1876-1934. 0.2 linear ft.
Series 3. Topical materials, 1899-1927. 0.2 linear ft.
Series 4. Photographs, undated. 0.1 linear ft.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Santa Ana (Calif.) -- History -- Sources
Photographic prints -- California -- Orange County -- 20th century.
Plats -- California -- Orange County.
Photographic prints -- California -- Orange County -- 19th century.
Armor, Alice L. -- Archives
Armor, Samuel -- Archives
Correspondence Series 1. 1898-1938

Physical Description: 0.2 Linear Feet
General Physical Description note: no content

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series contains letters, cards, and membership information sent to Samuel and Alice Armor and includes correspondence from Rev. M.L. Pearson of the First Presbyterian Church of Orange and his second wife Lola to the Armors and two photographs of natives of the Dutch East Indies taken by the Pearsons on one of their cruises. Also included are a 1917 letter from California Governor William D. Stephens and correspondence regarding Alice Armor's affairs following the death of her husband. Incoming correspondence in this series is arranged topically, followed by other correspondence.

box 1, folder 1-6
box 1, folder 1
box 1, folder 2-3
box 1, folder 2
box 1, folder 3
box 1, folder 4
box 1, folder 5
box 1, folder 6
box 1, folder 7

Incoming correspondence to Samuel and Alice Armor

Christmas cards, and undated 1938

General

1898-1926

1928-1938

Knox College alumni 1922-1924

Memberships 1908-1926

Pearson, M.L. and Lola 1926-1928

Correspondence regarding Alice Armor 1938

Orange County materials Series 2. 1876-1934

Physical Description: 0.2 Linear Feet
General Physical Description note: no content

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series contains miscellaneous materials pertaining to Orange County history. Materials in this series are arranged topically.

box 1, folder 8
folder XOS 1

Armor biographical information, undated

Election ballot sample, Republican Party, 11th Congressional, 39th Senatorial and 76th Assembly District, 1926

First Presbyterian Church of Orange

Program for reception honoring Rev. M.L. Pearson, 1934

Typescript history by Samuel and Alice Armor, 1924

Hewes Park (Orange, CA) postcards, undated.

General Physical Description note: 10 items.

box 1, folder 22
folder XOS 1

Orange County Public School student journal, 1876-1878

Plat map in manuscript, illustrating blocks between 4th Street in Santa Ana and LaVeta Avenue in Orange, and between the Santa Fe Railroad and Grand Avenue, ca. 1900

folder XOS 1

Santa Ana Valley Irrigation Company, annual report, 1928

Weather reports kept by Alice Armor, 1933

Topical materials Series 3. 1899-1927

Physical Description: 0.2 Linear Feet
General Physical Description note: no content

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series includes miscellaneous materials not associated with Orange County, California. Materials are arranged topically.

box 1, folder 14

Allied War Exposition postcards, undated.

General Physical Description note: 12 items.
box 1, folder 15  "Best Practicable Plan by Which the United States may Cooperate With Other Nations to Achieve and Preserve the Peace of the World" by Samuel Armor, typescript and holograph summary, undated
box 1, folder 16  Bishop, California postcards, undated.
          General Physical Description note: 13 items.
box 1, folder 17  Church-related materials
box 1, folder 17  A History of the Congregation Church and Society of Claridon, Ohio, . 1899
          General note
          Alice Armor's father served as pastor of this church.
box 1, folder 17  Calvary Presbyterian Church of San Diego, dedication service program, 1920
box 1, folder 17  Poems by Rev. Horace Taylor (Anacortes, WA), typescripts, and undated 1927
box 1, folder 18  Ohio postcards, undated.
          General Physical Description note: 4 items.
folder XOS 1  Temperance newspaper, Southern California White Ribbon (Covina, CA), 1922 July
          Physical Description: 0.1 Linear Feet
          General Physical Description note: no content
          Series Scope and Content Summary
          This series includes photographs of the Armor family, their friends, and a group of unidentified photographs.
box 1, folder 19  Armor family, and undated. ca. 1890
          General Physical Description note: 5 items.
box 1, folder 20  Armor friends, and undated 1894-1906
          General Physical Description note: 7 items.
box 1, folder 21  Unidentified people, undated.
          General Physical Description note: 6 items.