Patricia Stemler Wiley Rose Collection

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Patricia Stemler Wiley Rose Collection

Collection number: MS 139

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Patricia Stemler Wiley Rose collection
Dates: 1930-1996
Collection number: MS 139
Collector: Wiley, Patricia S.
Collection Size: 3 boxes, 2 flats
Repository: University of California, Santa Cruz. University Library. Special Collections and Archives
Santa Cruz, California 95064

Abstract: This collection contains materials from Roses of Yesterday and Today, formerly known as Lester Rose Gardens, in Watsonville, Calif. Includes scrapbooks & albums, business papers, artwork, miscellaneous publications, and photographs and catalog run.

Physical location: Stored in Special Collections & Archives: Advance notice is required for access to the papers.

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection open for research.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
Patricia Stemler Wiley Rose collection. MS 139. Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Acquisition Information
Gift of Patricia Stemler Wiley.

Organization History
The history of the world famous rose growing, breeding and shipping enterprise, Roses of Yesterday and Today, of Browns Valley Road, Watsonville, is represented in their catalogs. The format and content of the catalog has remained fairly consistent since the earliest versions were produced by Will Tillotson in the 1940's. Each issue began with a friendly essay written either by Mr. Tillotson ("CW" or Catalog Writer), Dorothy Stemler (known in the early catalogs as "Honorable Secretary"), or Patricia Stemler Wiley (Dorothy's daughter and the donor of the collection). The body of the catalog is an annotated list of the roses available in that year, each precisely and gracefully described. The catalogs are handsomely designed and attractively illustrated, the older years reflecting Dorothy's love of art and her skill as a photographer, the more recent issues continuing this tradition of graphic excellence with the work of Pat and her husband Jack. The charm of the catalogs lies in the care invested them; their design and production resemble that of a well-tended garden; they are literally "anthologies" (originally flower collections) of images, annotations, verses, and essays which when read in sequence
provide us with an engaging history of the firm. When Francis Lester, pioneer rosarian and author of My Friend the Rose, planted rose gardens among the redwoods in Browns Valley in 1937, he also began "a tradition of attractive, chatty catalogues calculated to infect their readers with Lester's love of the subject. These informative, readable booklets have been the old roses' most effective propagandist -- under Lester's successor, Will Tillotson, this catalogue ... inspired ...the founders of the Heritage Roses Group. (Thomas Christopher, In Search of Lost Roses, (New York, 1989) p.156).

Francis Lester died in 1945. The 1952 catalog conveys the playful relationship among the hardworking rose growers of Browns Valley: "Let it be admitted forthwith, all quips, quirks, effusions, omissions and errors within are the sole responsibility of Will Tillotson. Mrs. Lester looks with considerable doubt and some alarm on the literary antics of the catalog-writer." A decade later, the garden Lester established, known as the Marjorie Lester Gardens was swept away in the flood of December 1955. The poignant "ANNOUNCEMENT" of this disaster, written by Marjorie and Byron Quayle, her 2nd husband and partner, is one of the few business papers to survive the flood.

The 1959 catalog has the following introduction: "You'll be doing this some day' often commented the Catalog-Writer to Honorable Secretary, as he sorted his 'sack of adjectives' preparing another edition of Roses of Yesterday and Today. In leaving the old and rare roses in my care, he wrote in his Last Will and Testament ...'I would like to be remembered occasionally by mention in her catalogs -- and give her anything which I may transfer in style or content of those I have written for many years." "Remembered? [the italics are Honorable Secretary's (Dorothy Stemler's) own] "....Roses of Yesterday and Today is Will Tillotson." Will Tillotson (CW) had died in England in 1957, while, of course, on a rose buying trip.

As we peruse Honorable Secretary's catalogs and those of her daughter, it is easy to conclude that for twenty years, Roses of Yesterday and Today was Dorothy Stemler, and then, until 1997, Roses of Yesterday and Today was Patricia Stemler Wiley. The UCSC Library is honored to provide a home for their catalogs, evocative relics of local industry and creativity.

Alan Ritch

**Scope and Content of Collection**

This collection contains materials from Roses of Yesterday and Today, formerly known as Lester Rose Gardens, in Watsonville, Calif. Included are albums, scrapbooks, miscellaneous publications, photographs and catalog collection.

The research books have been cataloged separately and are available through UCSC's online catalog.

**Indexing Terms**

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

Wiley, Patricia Stemler--Archives
Lester Rose Gardens
Roses of Yesterday and Today
Rose culture--California--Watsonville Region
Rose breeders--California--Watsonville Region
Roses
Tillotson, Will
Lester, Francis Edward, 1868-

The "Little Rose Library" (approx. 121 titles) has been cataloged separately and available through UCSC's online catalog.

VT 5040 - Roses of yesterday and today [videorecording] : 1996

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<p>| box:folder 1:1 | Correspondence, stationary samples, clippings, photographs 1954-1993 |
| box:folder 1:2 | Research catalogs - other rose catalogs 1949 1993 |
| box:folder 1:3 | <strong>Roses of Yesterday and Today</strong> proof catalog with corrections 1994 |
| box:folder 1:4 | Artwork - for catalog n.d. |
| box:folder 1:5 | Photographs - of roses and rose paintings n.d. |
| box:folder 1:6 | Catalog cover samples 1960-1996 |
| box:folder 1:7 | Garden diary &quot;Garden Notes&quot; by Will Tillotson 1948-1956 |
| box:folder 2:1 | [Diary of quotes]- Will Tillotson ca. 1930s |
| box:folder 2:2 | Scrapbook - business forms, ads, letterhead samples, gift cards, re-order forms, etc. 1946-1957 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>box:folder 2:3</td>
<td>Diary - Will Tillotson 1946-1949</td>
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