Helen S. Giffen Papers

M. Carey
The University Library
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University Library
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Email: specoll@library.ucsc.edu
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Helen S. Giffen Papers

Collection number: MS 315

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Helen S. Giffen papers
Dates: 1980-1989
Collection number: MS 315
Creator: Giffen, Helen S.
Collection Size: 1 document box
Repository: University of California, Santa Cruz. University Library. Special Collections and Archives
Santa Cruz, California 95064

Abstract: This small collection includes Helen Giffen's notes & manuscripts on Georgiana Bruce Kirby.

Physical location: Stored in Special Collections And Archives: Advance notice is required for access to the papers.
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
Collection open for research.

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Preferred Citation
Helen S. Giffen papers. MS 315. Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Acquisition Information

Biography
Helen Smith Giffen was born in Alabama in 1894 and came to California as a infant. Her father, Edmund Morton Smith, had been hired as a reporter by the Los Angeles Times. He died a few months later, in a train accident, while on his way to a newspapers assignment in Colorado.

Mrs. Giffen's mother, who was a teacher, opened a private school in Los Angeles to support herself and her daughter. Mrs. Giffen studied there, along with a young man from nearby San Gabriel, named George Patton, who went on to make the Army a career.

Mrs. Giffen went to high school and business college in the Los Angeles area, where she later worked as a secretary for an exclusive women's club, as a mechanical engineer and as secretary for the city's Southwest Museum, where she said she became interested in California history.

She married Guy Giffen, an oil company executive, in 1922 and quit work. She returned to work, however, in the 1930s after her husband suffered a crippling heart attack. He died in the 1960s.

Mrs. Giffen was hired as Executive Secretary for the Society of California Pioneers, a male-dominated San Francisco group, in 1941 at a time when American men were heading off to World War II. The Society of California Pioneers was founded in
August 1850 to ferret out and preserve state history and was patronized, from the start, by wealthy merchants and businessmen, such as James Lick.


Mrs. Giffen died in October 1987 in Los Gatos, CA.

San Jose Mercury News, October 30, 1987

Scope and Content of Collection

This collection contains a small amount of correspondence, Kirby's notes, early drafts of manuscripts on Georgiana Bruce Kirby as well as photocopies of Kirby's diary "Das Tagebuch".

Indexing Terms

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

Giffen, Helen S. (Helen Smith), 1893--Archives
Kirby, Georgiana Bruce, 1818-1887
Women pioneers--California
Women social reformers--California
Santa Cruz County (Calif.)--History

Related Material


| box-folder 1:1 | Correspondence 1978-1988 |
| box-folder 1:2-3 | Pt. 1 "A Stormy Petrel of Santa Cruz: Biography of Georgiana Bruce Kirby", 1978-1979 |
| box-folder 1:2 | "From Birth to Maturity", 1818-1849 |
| box-folder 1:3 | "The Santa Cruz Years", 1850-1887 |
| box-folder 1:4 | "The Stormy Petrel of Santa Cruz: A Brief Biography of Georgiana Bruce Kirby", 1976 |
| box-folder 1:6 | Drafts of earlier versions - annotated typescripts, ca. 1970-1979 |
| box-folder 1:7 | Notes, additional drafts - holograph copies, annotated typescripts, ca. 1970-1979 |
| box-folder 1:8 | "Das Tagebuch" by G.B. Kirby - photocopies 1852-1860 |
| box-folder 1:9 | "Das Tagebuch" by G.B. Kirby, with corrections and amplifications by Helen S. Giffen - typescript 1933 |
| box-folder 1:10 | Obituary, clippings, ca. 1970-1987 |