Register of the Gibbons (Stuart) Collection, 1911-1976

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Register of the Gibbons (Stuart) Collection, 1911-1976

Collection number: Mss225

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Contact Information

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Gibbons (Stuart) Collection
Date (inclusive): 1911-1976
Collection number: Mss225
Creator: Sally Gibbons Wright
Extent: 2 linear ft.
Repository: University of the Pacific. Library. Holt-Atherton Department of Special Collections
Stockton, CA 95211
Shelf location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the library's online catalog.
Language: English.
Access
Collection is open for research.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Gibbons (Stuart) Collection, Mss225, Holt-Atherton Department of Special Collections, University of the Pacific Library

Biography

Stuart Gibbons was born at Sonora, California on April 19, 1896. He was educated in the Sonora Public Schools, graduating from Tuolumne County Union High School (1915). After graduation, Gibbons worked at various commercial jobs before enlisting in the Navy (1917). Following his discharge (1919), Gibbons returned to work at a Sonora bank, later becoming a life insurance salesman (1921). The following year, he married Frances Bromley and went into partnership with a navy friend at a small Lake Tahoe resort. In 1922, Gibbons moved to Stockton where he became manager of the California-Western State Life Insurance Co. By 1929, he was president of the Stockton Underwriters Association. Gibbons continued to work for California-Western State Life until 1943. In that year, he became a private insurance carrier and operated his own business until 1951, when he joined the firm of Frank Williams and Company as a real estate and insurance salesman. Gibbons was for many years an active member of the Stockton Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of their "Welcoming Squad," and, in 1976, the Chamber dubbed him "Mr. Stockton" for this and other community activities.
During the 1950s, Stuart Gibbons gained a reputation as a conservationist for his successful efforts to arrange the purchase—by the State of California—of the South Grove at Calaveras Big Trees. In 1952, Gibbons spearheaded another successful drive to have Caswell Grove, an oak forest on the Stanislaus River in southern San Joaquin County, also declared a state park. Stuart Gibbons was active in a variety of ways in Stockton and San Joaquin County public affairs. In 1948, he helped to form the Stockton Recreation Commission. This agency oversaw the development of many park sites throughout the greater Stockton area. From 1958 through 1960, Gibbons was a member of the Stockton City Council. He later served on many civic improvement committees, including the Sperry Building Restoration Committee (1968) and the Cultural Heritage Board (1969-85). In 1976, he was instrumental in saving the El Dorado School from demolition. Gibbons was also active in local history organizations. The most notable of these were: the Pacific Center for Western Studies, the Jed Smith Society, and the San Joaquin Pioneer and Historical Society. Gibbons influenced the state legislature to create the "Mr. California" award to honor excellence in local history scholarship. His friends, Rockwell D. Hunt and R. Coke Wood, were the first recipients of the award.

Scope and Content
The Stuart Gibbons Collection consists of Gibbons' Sonora (Calif.) childhood papers and photographs, as well as later papers delineating Gibbons' involvement with business, politics and historic preservation in Stockton (Calif.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 1 EARLY YEARS, SONORA (1896-1920); PHOTOGRAPHS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1-Biographical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2-School memorabilia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3-High school diplomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4-Fanny Bromley [Mrs. Gibbons] school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5-Personal expense ledgers, 1913-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-Class of 1911, Sonora Grammar School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Class portrait photo [5x8&quot; mounted on black cardstock]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-22 individual circular portrait photos [3.75&quot; diameter]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Circular photo of Sonora Grammar School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Dance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Graduation Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Class of '11 Senior Comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7-Green &amp; Gold (1915) [Tuolumne Co. High School Year Book]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8-Class of 1915 Graduation announcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9-Photos, 1913-15 [chiefly 2x3.5&quot;]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Tuolumne Co. scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Vacations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-School chums, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10-Photos, c1860-1920 [chiefly 3x5&quot;]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Sonora scenes, 19th c.-1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-School chums. c1910-1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11-Photos, 1915-20 [?] [2x3.5&quot;]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Yosemite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12-Photo, Tuolumne Co. High School Class of 1915 [8x10&quot; mounted on gray cardstock]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13-Photo, &quot;Main Street, Sonora, c1938&quot; [10.75x13.75&quot;]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14-Photo, &quot;Confederate Soldier&quot; Rock near Columbia, 1976 [5x7&quot; color]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX 2: SONORA SCHOOLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1-Class of 1915 Reunions: 20 year (1935)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2-Class of 1915 Reunions: Misc. years #1 (1949,1951,1952,1958,1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3-Class of 1915 Reunions: 50 year (1965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5-Class of 1915 Reunions: 60 year (1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-Gibbons Trophy (Sonora HS): 1928-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7-Gibbons Trophy (Sonora HS): 1941-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8-Gibbons Trophy (Sonora HS): 1953-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9-Gibbons Trophy (Sonora HS): 1962-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10-V.A. Dunlavy Day, 1953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.11-Sonora Elementary School

BOX 3 PERSONAL LIFE
3.1-Business: Insurance-Real Estate
3.2-Business: Stockton Chamber of Commerce
3.3-Business: "Welcoming Squad" (c1975)
3.4-Politics: Opposition to Open Housing, 1968
3.5-Politics: Opposition to School Busing, 1968
3.6-Politics: Republican Party-General
3.7-Politics: Vote No on Prop. "O," 1973
3.8-Personal Papers: General Correspondence
3.9-Personal Papers: Gibbons Home, Sonora
3.10-Personal Papers: Letters of recommendation for Navy post, 1942
3.11-Personal Papers: Miscellaneous Awards
3.12-Personal Papers: Personal Correspondence
3.13-Personal Papers: Personal Correspondence: Gifts, Memorials, Speaking Engagements
3.14-Personal Papers: Rockwell Hunt Correspondence
3.15-Organizational Affiliations: American Legion, Karl Ross Post #16
3.16-Organizational Affiliations: Christian Science Church
3.17-Organizational Affiliations: High 12 Club, Stockton
3.18-Organizational Affiliations: Jed Smith Society
3.19-Organizational Affiliations: 1933 Membership Resignations
3.20-Organizational Affiliations: Pacific Center for Western Studies, Associates

BOX 4: PUBLIC AFFAIRS
4.2-Calif. Comm. on Aging, 1973
4.3-Camanche Park Board
4.4-Chang Jade Collection Leaves Haggin, 1965
4.5-Citizens' Housing Committee
4.6-City Planning Commission
4.7-Columbia [Calif] Property
4.8-Columbia Property #2
4.9-Committee to Save Sperry Building
4.10-Community Christmas Tree
4.11-Community Development Committee
4.12-Cultural Heritage Board
4.13-Cultural Heritage Board: Historic Sites Inventory
4.14-El Dorado School
4.15-El Dorado School #2
4.16-Local History Miscellany
4.17-"Mr. Stockton," 1976
4.18-San Joaquin Co. Bicentennial Commission, 1976
4.19-San Joaquin Pioneer & Historical Society
4.20-Save the South Grove Big Trees, c1950-1969
4.21-Senior Citizen Activities
4.22-Senior Citizen of the Year, 1974
4.23-Stkn.: City & Port
4.25-Stkn.: Post Office dedication
4.26-Vandalism
4.27-Weber [Capt. Charles] Parking Lot
4.28-Weber-Kennedy Home
4.29-Weber Rock
4.30-Weber Tree
4.31-Misc. Correspondence & Clippings