

**TITLE:** Ruth Foster Collection

**DATE RANGE:** 1920s-1970s

**CALL NUMBER:** Y-MS4

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 5 linear feet (10 boxes)

**PROVENANCE:** Unknown.

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**CREDIT LINE:** Ruth Foster Collection Y-MS4, Arizona Historical Society-Rio Colorado Division

**PROCESSED BY:** Linda Whitaker, November 2013

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**

“In the eyes of the world, I am probably called a loner because my family wants no part of living in the hot spot of Yuma...” So writes Ruth Foster in a brief biographical statement written after a 33-year career teaching English at Yuma High School. She was born September 3, 1903 in Denver, Colorado – the eldest child of Isaiah W. Foster and Cora E. Mosteller. She graduated from Colorado State Teachers’ College in 1927 and came to Arizona in 1928 where she taught in the Duncan and Marana high schools before coming to Yuma. Ruth received a master’s degree from the University of Arizona in 1937. She was a highly regarded educator who maintained strong connections to leaders in education state and nationwide. One of her hobbies was writing which is reflected in her prolific correspondence.

Ruth was active in numerous professional organizations and civic clubs which included Arizona Education Association, American Association of University Women, Delta Kappa Gamma, Yuma Business and Professional Women’s Club, and Yuma Chapter of the United Nations Association. She was a life-long learner whose post retirement interests included politics, community service, and public policy issues such as housing for the elderly, women’s rights and health insurance. She was a feminist long before the word became a cliché. Ruth ran unsuccessfully for the Arizona House of Representatives in 1970 and attended the International Women’s Year conference in Mexico City in 1971 which she described as a “priceless experience.” In 1974, twenty organizations came together for “Ruth Foster Day” honoring her for many years of community service. She died November 4, 1975 in Yuma. Her ashes are buried in Crawford, Colorado.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:**

This collection is remarkable for documenting the professional career and the community service life of an unmarried woman that begins in the late 1920s and ends with the women's rights movement. In a diary entry, Ruth Foster mentions cleaning out her early files to make room for more recent works in progress. This may explain why the bulk of her correspondence dates from the 1960s despite lifelong friendships and close ties to her brother and sister-in-law. Because Ruth served in many professional and community leadership roles, the organizational work, community activism, and issue-based research are richly detailed. Original order is unknown.

This collection is arranged in four series and chronologically within. **Series I: Personal (biographical material); Series II: Correspondence (general, personal, professional) Series III: Organizations; Series IV: Writings.**

**CONTAINER LIST:**

| <b>Box</b> | <b>Folder</b> | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Dates</b>                |
|------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>1</b>   | 1             | <b>Personal:</b> Biographical (autobiographical statements, tributes, educational background, certificates, awards; includes photo) | 1968-1975                   |
|            | 2             | <b>Personal:</b> Board of Education Contracts (Duncan and Marana)   | 1928-1934                   |
|            | 3             | <b>Personal:</b> Board of Education Contracts (Yuma Union High School)  | 1937-1968                   |
|            | 4             | <b>Personal:</b> Candidacy for Arizona House of Representatives (District 5)  | 1970                        |
|            | 5             | <b>Personal:</b> Classroom Materials (English Literature)   | 1920s-1960s                 |
|            | 6             | <b>Personal:</b> Classroom Materials (local history)  | n.d.                        |
|            | 7             | <b>Personal:</b> Classroom Materials (poetry collected by Ruth Foster)  | n.d.                        |
|            | 8             | <b>Personal:</b> Classroom Materials (various)  | 1950s-1960s                 |
|            | 9             | <b>Personal:</b> Memorabilia (University of Arizona; war rations)   | 1930s-1940s                 |
|            | 10            | <b>Personal:</b> Yuma Union High School Publications  | 1923, 1937-1938, 1940, 1948 |
| <b>2</b>   | 1             | <b>Correspondence:</b> General  | 1968-1969                   |
|            | 2             | <b>Correspondence:</b> General  | 1970-1971                   |
|            | 3             | <b>Correspondence:</b> General  | 1972-1973                   |
|            | 4             | <b>Correspondence:</b> General  | 1974                        |
|            | 5             | <b>Correspondence:</b> General  | 1975                        |
|            | 6             | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1962-1966                   |
|            | 7             | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1967-1968                   |
|            | 8             | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1969                        |
|            | 9             | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1970                        |
| <b>3</b>   | 1             | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1971                        |

|          |   |   |             |
|----------|---|---|-------------|
|          | 2 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1972        |
|          | 3 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1973        |
|          | 4 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Personal   | 1974-1975   |
|          | 5 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Professional - Education (includes news clippings, programs, profiles of educators)                            | 1950s-1970s |
|          | 6 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Professional – Education   | 1965-1969   |
|          | 7 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Professional – Education   | 1970-1975   |
|          | 8 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Professional – Teachers’ Retirement (annual reports, pamphlets, brochures) 1 of 3                              | 1947-1956   |
| <b>4</b> | 1 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Professional – Teachers’ Retirement 2 of 3   | 1952-1961   |
|          | 2 | <b>Correspondence:</b> Professional – Teachers’ Retirement (includes research notes on other state retirement plans) 3 of 3           | 1968-1975   |
|          | 3 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women ( federal and state status of women, labor statistics, reports) 1 of 2 | 1939-1971   |
|          | 4 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women ( federal and state status of women, labor statistics, reports) 2 of 2 | 1939-1971   |
|          | 5 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (bylaws, handbooks for branches)                                       | 1946-1972   |
|          | 6 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (general correspondence)   | 1962-1966   |
| <b>5</b> | 1 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (mental health)  | 1964-1965   |
|          | 2 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (newsletters, news clippings)  | 1964-1973   |
|          | 3 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women ( <i>Legislative Program Kit</i> )                                     | 1965-1966   |
|          | 4 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (general correspondence)   | 1967        |
|          | 5 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (reports, newsletters)   | 1968-1969   |
|          | 6 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (general correspondence)   | 1969-1972   |
|          | 7 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women (issues with the media)  | 1969-1974   |
|          | 8 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women ( <i>Power Quotient Bag</i> )  | 1970        |
|          | 9 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of University Women ( <i>Journal</i> )   | 1972-1974   |
| <b>6</b> | 1 | <b>Organizations:</b> American Association of   | 1973-1975   |

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|----------|----|---|-------------|
|          |    | University Women (general correspondence)   |             |
|          | 2  | <b>Organizations:</b> Arizona Women's Political Caucus                                      | 1974-1975   |
|          | 3  | <b>Organizations:</b> Business and Professional Women's Club                                | 1950-1975   |
|          | 4  | <b>Organizations:</b> Common Cause  | 1971-1974   |
|          | 5  | <b>Organizations:</b> Democratic Women's Club of Yuma                                       | 1971-1973   |
|          | 6  | <b>Organizations:</b> Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge-Yuma Chapter                       | 1972        |
|          | 7  | <b>Organizations:</b> League of Women Voters (Equal Rights Amendment)                       | 1948-1975   |
|          | 8  | <b>Organizations:</b> League of Women Voters (United Nations)                               | 1965-1972   |
|          | 9  | <b>Organizations:</b> League of Women Voters (welfare reform)                               | 1968-1972   |
|          | 10 | <b>Organizations:</b> League of Women Voters (pollution)                                    | 1971-1972   |
|          | 11 | <b>Organizations:</b> League of Women Voters (brochures, correspondence, newsletters)       | 1971-1975   |
|          | 12 | <b>Organizations:</b> League of Women Voters (campaign spending)                            | 1972-1974   |
| <b>7</b> | 1  | <b>Organizations:</b> Methodist Church (histories, directories, brochures)                  | 1940s-1970s |
|          | 2  | <b>Organizations:</b> Methodist Church (social concerns kit)                                | 1964-1971   |
|          | 3  | <b>Organizations:</b> Methodist Church (social concerns minutes, correspondence)            | 1964-1975   |
|          | 4  | <b>Organizations:</b> Methodist Church (residence for elderly)                              | 1970-1975   |
|          | 5  | <b>Organizations:</b> United Nations Association Yuma Branch                                | 1964-1969   |
|          | 6  | <b>Organizations:</b> United Nations Association Yuma Branch                                | 1970-1971   |
|          | 7  | <b>Organizations:</b> United Nations Association Yuma Branch                                | 1972        |
|          | 8  | <b>Organizations:</b> United Nations Association Yuma Branch                                | 1973-1975   |
| <b>8</b> | 1  | <b>Organizations:</b> University of Arizona Extension Service (newsletters)                 | 1971-1975   |
|          | 2  | <b>Organizations:</b> University of Arizona Extension Service (Women's Involvement Program) | 1973-1974   |
|          | 3  | <b>Organizations:</b> Yuma County Council on Aging  | 1973-1975   |
|          | 4  | <b>Organizations:</b> Yuma Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse                                | 1972-1973   |
|          | 5  | <b>Writings:</b> Book Reviews   | 1930s-1960s |

|    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 6  | <b>Writings:</b> Commentary on Correspondence  | n.d. |
| 7  | <b>Writings:</b> Essays (about Yuma)   | n.d. |
| 8  | <b>Writings:</b> Essays (about Arizona)  | n.d. |
| 9  | <b>Writings:</b> Teachers' Retirement (speech)   | n.d. |
| 10 | <b>Writings:</b> "The Strife for Peace"  | n.d. |
| 11 | <b>Writings:</b> "Becoming Acquainted with Dictionaries"   | n.d. |
| 12 | <b>Writings:</b> "Lank Fogg, Mechanic, a Juvenile Short Story"   | n.d. |
| 13 | <b>Writings:</b> "Social and Business Correspondence"  | n.d. |
| 14 | <b>Writings:</b> "The Place of Edith Wharton in American Fiction"  | 1935 |
| 15 | <b>Writings:</b> "American Newspapers and Magazines"   | 1963 |
| 16 | <b>Writings:</b> "The Story of the American Newspaper"   | n.d. |
| 17 | <b>Writings:</b> Diary of Trip to Mexico   | 1971 |
| 18 | <b>Writings:</b> <i>Grammar and Composition for the Seventh Grade</i> (thesis for Master of Arts, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, University of Arizona) | 1936 |