

TITLE: The Clara Fish Roberts Collection

DATE RANGE: 1851-1957

CALL NUMBER: MS 689

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4 boxes, 2 linear feet

PROVENANCE: Clara Fish Roberts donated this collection to the Arizona Historical Society before her death in 1965.

COPYRIGHT: Requests for permission to publish materials from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society.

RESTRICTIONS: This collection is unrestricted.

CREDIT LINE: The Clara Fish Roberts Collection - MS 689, Arizona Historical Society-Tucson

PROCESSED BY: This collection was re-processed in April and May of 1994, by Scott Thompson, under the supervision of the Archivist, Rose Byrne.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: A native Tucsonan, Clara Fish Roberts was born on September 3, 1876, into one of Arizona's pioneer families. The second of four children, she grew up in a family actively involved in the economic, political, and social affairs of the Old Pueblo. Her father, Edward Nye Fish, arrived in the Territory in 1865 and set up a post trading store in Calabasas, and later a general merchandise store in Tucson. He soon diversified, operating a harness shop, the Eagle Milling Company, and developing mine properties throughout southern Arizona. Locally, he was a member of the Pima County Board of Supervisors and a past president of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society. Maria Wakefield, Clara's mother, came to the Territory in 1873 at the request of Governor A.P.K. Safford to open Tucson's first free school. The following year she wed Edward Nye Fish.

On October 1, 1891, Clara Fish became the first student to matriculate at the University of Arizona. After passing an informal oral examination given by several professors, she signed her name at the top of the school register. Upon graduating from the University in 1897 with a Bachelor of Science degree in mining, she served as principal of the Congress Street School and later taught courses in Spanish, Latin, and Logic at the Northern Arizona Normal School in Flagstaff. In the summer of 1905, she married Frederick Carlyle Roberts, a civil engineer.

Throughout her life, Clara Fish Roberts took an active part in Tucson affairs. Elected to the Tucson School Board in 1923, she was the first woman ever to serve in that capacity. Besides being an educator, she belonged to numerous women's organizations, including the Daughters of the American Revolution, League of Women Voters, American

Association of University Women, and Tucson Women's Club. Roberts helped found the University of Arizona Alumni Club and served as its president. A long time member of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, she was also on its Board of Directors.

In 1959, Roberts moved to Sherman, Texas, where she lived with her daughter, Virginia Flaccus, until her death in 1965.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: The Roberts collection consists of four boxes arranged in twelve series: (1) Unpublished Material; (2) Business and Legal Documents, 1851-1957; (3) Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1892-1964; (4) Tucson Women's Organizations Material, 1883-1962; (5) School Material; Tucson Schools and Northern Arizona Normal School, 1872-1941; (6) William Lewis Wakefield Papers, 1900-1932; (7) Published Material, 1871-1951; (8) Newspaper Clippings, 1873-1963; (9) Maps; (10) Miscellaneous Material, 1884-1949; (11) Don Alonzo Sanford Correspondence, 1885-1895; and (12) Scrapbook Material.

This is a richly diverse body of material connected with the history of Tucson and southern Arizona. A number of items in the collection describe conditions and events in early Tucson. As a member of the prominent Fish family, Clara Fish Roberts acquired numerous deeds, ledgers, and other business and legal documents pertaining to her family's entrepreneurial interests in and around the Old Pueblo. Roberts' long career as an educator and civic luminary is represented in the form of correspondence, school records, and meeting minutes. The items contained in the collection suggest that Roberts recognized their lasting historical significance.

Series One, Unpublished Material, contains manuscript histories and personal reminiscences of life in early Tucson. Of particular interest are the biographies of Maria Wakefield Fish and the Fish genealogy compiled by Roberts. Two autograph books from Roberts' childhood and a notebook that apparently belonged to a local Law enforcement officer round out the series. Items are arranged chronologically.

Series Two, Business and Legal Documents, 1851-1957, consists of account ledgers and business receipts that belonged to E.N. Fish (including a notebook with recipes for liniment and healing powder), quit-claim deeds and deeds of sale for various properties, tax receipts of Maria Fish, and miscellaneous legal documents. Two of the deeds (one dated 1859 and the other 1861) named Mark Aldrich, past mayor and postmaster of Tucson, as one of the parties. Folders are arranged both topically and chronologically.

Series Three, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1892-1964, contains a variety of material, most of which was written by or addressed to Clara Fish Roberts. Apparently, there was some controversy surrounding her claim to the first student to register at the University of Arizona and the series included letters corroborating her assertion. An interesting history of Tucson public schools is related in an undated letter to Mr. McCrea. Correspondence between Mrs. Roberts and the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, wedding invitations, and a letter from Arizona pioneer John S. Vosburg are also contained in the series. Items are arranged chronologically.

Series Four, Tucson Women's Organizations Material, 1883-1962, contains correspondence, meeting minutes, membership rolls, and club directories, bulletins and by-laws from a number of women's groups. Roberts was active in the Women's Club of Tucson, Collegiate Club, League of Women Voters (LWV), Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and the American Association of University Women. Of particular interest are the Women's Christian Temperance Union meetings from 1883-1893 (her mother was a member), as well as those from the LWV and the DAR. Roberts' handwritten history of the Collegiate Club of Tucson is notable. The folder is arranged chronologically.

Series Five, School Material: Tucson Schools and Northern Arizona Normal School, 1872-1941, is comprised of correspondence, class schedules, budget and accounting records, and school bulletins. Bank check stubs from 1873-1874 provide insight into expenditures for Tucson's first public school. Items in this series are arranged chronologically.

Series Six, William Lewis Wakefield Papers, 1900-1932, consists of lode claims, business agreements and records, legal documents and personal notebook of Clara Fish Robert's' uncle. Born in Bangor, New York in 1851, Wakefield moved to Tucson for health reasons. Although he was engaged in a number of business pursuits, he spent most of his time locating and developing mines in southern Arizona. The Wakefield material is arranged chronologically.

Series Seven, Published Material, 1871-1951, is broad in scope and contains journals, school newspapers, brochures from the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, and depositions given in 1871 by several of those involved in the Camp Grant Massacre. Folders are arranged in chronological order.

Series Eight, Newspaper Clippings, 1873-1963, contains articles about Tucson and the Territorial period. Newspaper editor John Wasson, a friend of E.N. Fish and a former Arizona resident, authored "Arizona, 1870-1903", a piece published in 1903 in the Pomona Times. Several anecdotes provided by Clara Fish Roberts about Tucson's First Methodist Church and its founder, Reverend George H. Adams, accompany another article. The folder is arranged chronologically.

Series Nine, Maps, included several photocopies of field maps of Tubac, the Gulf of California, and Altar, Sonora. Godfrey Sykes presented the reprints to Frederick C. Roberts in 1932.

Series Ten, Miscellaneous Material, 1884-1949, consists of interesting and colorful memorabilia. Of particular note is a funeral announcement for Edward Fish, the son of E.N. Fish from his first marriage (a union not referred to in the Fish family tree compiled by Clara Fish Roberts), dated 1888. The series also contains letterhead from Tombstone's Occidental Hotel, ribbons showing the University of Arizona's original

colors, and Alumni Office records listing former University of Arizona students and faculty members who served and died in World War II.

Series Eleven, Don Alonzo Sanford Correspondence, 1885-1895, contains twelve letters, the majority of them written to Sanford. Two of the letters mention an earthquake in 1887 that rocked Tucson. While Sanford and E.N. Fish were contemporaries, it is not known why Roberts had these items in her possession.

The folder is arranged chronologically.

Series Twelve, Scrapbook Material, contains three business ledgers that belonged to E.N. Fish. He gave them to his daughter, Clara, who used them to collect greeting cards, valentines, and post cards, which she glued to the pages. Apart from the colorful images, the original pages (most obscured by the pasted-on items) detail purchases made at Fish's mercantile stores. Most notable is the day book from Fort Mason, dated 1866-1867. Entries include purchases by Colonel Ronstadt, Charles Etchells, and the governor of Sonora, Mexico. Items are arranged chronologically.

CONTAINER LIST:

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
1		Series One, Unpublished Material	1873-1955
	1	Unpublished Material	1873-1955
	Item 1	Autograph book	1884-1887
	Item 2	Autograph book	1889-1897
	Item 3	Notebook (owner unknown)	1921
		Series Two, Business and Legal Documents	1851-1957
	2	Miscellaneous quit-claim deeds and deeds of sale	1851-1957
	3	Miscellaneous legal documents	1862-1954
	4	Maria Fish's Territorial, State, and County tax receipts	1888-1916
	5	Legal documents pertaining to the property at 40 S. Main ("The Old Fish Corral")	1897-1957
	6	Business records of E.N. Fish	1880-1892
2	Item 4	Scales	1903-1906
	Item 5	Ledger	1908-1914
	Item 6	Cash ledger	1909-1915
	Item 7	Southern Arizona Bank and Trust Company account book	1910-1914
		Series Three, Miscellaneous Correspondence	1892-1964
	7	Miscellaneous correspondence	1892-1964
		Series Four, Tucson Women's	1883-1962

		Organization Material	
	8	Material	1883-1962
3		Series Five, School Material	1872-1941
	9	Tucson Public Schools and Northern Arizona Normal School	1872-1941
		Series Six, William Lewis Wakefield Papers	1900-1932
	10	William L. Wakefield Papers	1900-1932
		Series Seven, Published Material	1871-1951
	11	Published Material	1871-1916
	12	Published Material	1917-1951
		Series Eight, Newspaper Clippings	1873-1963
	13	Newspaper Clippings	1873-1963
		Series Nine, Maps	Undated
	14	Maps	Undated
		Series Ten, Miscellaneous Material	1884-1949
	15	Miscellaneous Material	1884-1949
		Series Eleven, Don Alonzo Sanford Correspondence	1885-1895
	16	Don A. Sanford Correspondence	1885-1895
		Series Twelve, Scrapbook Material	1866-1878
	Item 8	Day book from Fish store at Fort Mason	1866-1867
	Item 9	Ledger, dated 1868, converted to scrapbook	Undated
	Item 10	Day book from 1878, converted to scrapbook	Undated