

Grand Rapids History & Special Collections

Archives

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Finding Aid for the

Cadette Everett Fitch Collection

Collection # 040

September 2008 version

Abstract

The Cadette Everett Fitch Collection contains original ink nature sketches, ca. 1875(?). Also included is an illustrated travel journal called "A Few Idle Days", of a seven-day boat trip down the Grand River from Grand Rapids to Grand Haven and Lake Michigan in September, 1889, taken by Cadette and her two children George E. and Louise Fitch. The trip, begun on September 12, 1889, is said to have been inspired by Mrs. Pennell's account of a trip down the Thames. Cadette Everett Fitch (1840-1927) was the daughter of Franklin Everett, early settler, teacher and historian of the Grand River Valley. A teacher, artist and community leader herself, Cadette Everett married carriage-maker George Clay Fitch in 1863. Their son, George Everett Fitch, accumulated a collection of historic photographs (See GRHSCC Collection 018). Cadette studied briefly with Grand Rapids artist Marinus Harting, who was also the instructor of Mathias Alten and other Grand Rapids associated artists of this generation. An additional 86 illustrations believed to be by Cadette Fitch are found in the Richmond Family Collection, #094. A few of those drawings are dated, ranging from 1873-1876.

Collection #: 040

Accession #: 00.000. Old Collection F7:A9.

Donor: Cadette E. Fitch, 1927

Span dates: 1875-1889.

Processor: Original processor, William C. Black, April, 1897.

Finding aid modified by Richard H. Harms, Nov. 1996.

Folders found mislabeled in the box. Inventory created, numbering items within the folder, except for the bad photocopied pages, July 14, 1999 R. Mayne.

Xref for Old Collection Cadette Fitch illustrations, accessioned as part of the Richmond Col. 094, R. Mayne, Mar. 2000.

Box Summary, Marcella Beck, August 23, 2000.

Heavy finding aid revisions, reboxing, original items numbered & sleeved in plastic. R. Mayne, Oct. 2002

Size: 0.3 cu.ft. ; xx linear ft.

Related Collections

Coll. 141, the Grand Rapids Historical Society Collection, contains negatives which correspond to these images, probably made from the originals, for an article for a Society publication.

These negatives have now been added to the Copy Negatives database, using a 141 number. The box containing the negatives, 141-10.5, has been placed with the copy negatives

7/27/2004

Box Summary

Box No.	Description of Contents	Box Description
1	Nature Drawings User copies of Nature Drawings User Copy of "A Few Idle Days" Photographs of selected ill. From "A Few Idle Days"	Slim
2	"A Few Idle Days" Original Original nature drawings and notebook	Folio clam

Biography

Cadette Everett Fitch (1840-1927) was the daughter of Franklin Everett, early settler, teacher and historian of the Grand River Valley. A teacher, artist and community leader herself, Cadette Everett married carriage-maker George Clay Fitch in 1863. Their son, George Everett Fitch, accumulated a collection of historic photographs (Collection 18) and published a pictorial history of Grand Rapids in 1925. Cadette Fitch possessed a talent for sketching, as well as an ability to express herself and describe her surroundings. She studied with Grand Rapids artist Marinus Harding [sic, Harting) for a brief time. Outliving her husband by 29 years, Cadette Everett Fitch died at the age of 87.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the remains of a reused booklet “Methods of St[udy?], Agassiz?”, that includes thirteen (13) ink drawings either on loose used lined paper, or on the flyleaves, by Cadette Everett Fitch. Subjects illustrated are primarily insects and nature themes. From the notes on the back of the sketches, these appear to have been originally part of a nature notebook of Everett's, which continues to house them. The image on the first flyleaf is inscribed “Mrs. Geo. C. Fitch, Oct. 10th, 1875” (or 1895).

Also part of the Cadette Fitch Collection is an illustrated travel journal “A Few Idle Days”. This is a description of a seven-day rowboat trip on the Grand River from Grand Rapids to Grand Haven, taken by Cadette Everett Fitch and her two children George E. and Louise. The trip, begun on September 12, 1889, is said to have been inspired by Mrs. Pennell's account of a trip down the Thames. The handwritten account of the journey includes thirty-one (31) sketches on thirty (30) sheets, including the cover, by Cadette Everett Fitch, of various scenes encountered on the journey.

Accompanying the original material for “A Few Idle Days’ are:

- A photocopied usage copy of the travel journal, to limit the handling & destruction of the original material.
- 8x10 Copy photographs of 13 of the drawings.

The images in this collection are good descriptions of the Grand River Valley before 1900. The drawings detail natural features of the landscape and structures along the river. The journal's written descriptions of the flora and fauna, as well as human activity on the Grand River and in its valley, give insight into the area, just before the turn of the century.

Series Descriptions

PLEASE USE THE USAGE PHOTOCOPIES OF THESE ITEMS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE,
IN ORDER TO PROTECT THAT ORIGINALS

Series I. Nature Drawings, 1875.

Series II. “A Few Idle Days”, 1888

Contents

Box Folder Description

1 1 **Series I. Nature Drawing, 1875.**
Usage Photocopies.

1 4 Originals. Please use the photocopies above instead of the originals, to
protect the important historical items.

Note: A red buckram notebook, with a white label "Methods of [Study?] .. Agassiz?" contains the Old Collection number F7:A9.2 on the front fly leaf. Most of the pages have been cut from the notebook. Perhaps this was done by Cadette Fitch herself when she reused the notebook & paper for sketches. Or, perhaps this was done at some later date. In 1999, 13 images in total were found here. 3 are still on the pages that are part of the notebook, Items [1] and [2] on the front two flyleaf pages, and Item [13] on the back flyleaf. The other 10 items are done of scrap paper of various sizes, perhaps taken from the pages cut from the notebook. All of the numbers given here have been assigned by staff, and are written in pencil on the items. The images are generally described below, though no attempt has been made to transcribe the fragments of original written content on the scraps used for these illustrations.

1. Front Flyleaf = [Insects in spider web on plant] Inscribed "Mrs. Geo. C. Fitch, Oct. 10th, 1875."
2. Second front flyleaf [Dragonfly(?)]
13. Back flyleaf – [Spider]

Loose items

3. "From the Shore of Lake Michigan"
4. [Butterfly]
- 1 1 Nature drawings, 1875.
5. [Insect ; cricket(?)]
6. [Insect ; fly(?)]
7. [Insect]
8. [Insect ; dragonfly]
9. [Crab]
10. [Caterpillar on branch]
11. [Insect in natural scene]
12. [4 insects]

1 2 **Series II. "A Few Idle Days" 1889.**
Usage Photocopies

Illustration pages:

[1] Cover ill. "A Few Idle Days".

[2]

[3]

[8] [Settlement with bridge] or [Mills, trestle & river folk]

[11] [Plaster factory] or [Plaster bed]

[12]

[13] [Bridge supports(?)]

[15] [Bridge]

[16] [Person in boat, person standing on bank at end of boat]

[18] [Grandville resort(?)]

[19]

[20]

[21] [Woman w parasol, seated on bank ...]

[23] [Settlement from hill top]

[24]

[25]

[28]

[32]

[40] 2 small images

[42]

[43]

[44] [Logging or lumber mill(?)]

[48] [Lake Michigan(?)]

[50] [Grand Haven(?)]

1 2

[52] [Culter(?) House]

[54] {House w wood walk path}

[56] [Lake Michigan & warf(?)]

[58] [Lake with boats]

[60] [Lake Michigan]

[62] [Lake Michigan]

1 3 Photographs of selected sketches from "A Few Idle Days," 1889.

"A Few Idle Days" [original], 1889. [62 items including front &
back(blank) covers.

2	1	Sheets 1-10
2	2	Sheets 11-20
2	3	Sheets 21-30
2	4	Sheets 31-40
2	5	Sheets 41-50
2	6	Sheets 51-63

Appendix

Notes on the Cadette Fitch illustrations in the Richmond Family Collection (094)

86 illustrations have been found in the Old Collection materials, with the accession number R3:A9.8 for Rebecca Richmond.

Review of these items show two with initials “CEF”. Others of these illustrations are similar to the drawings in Collection 040. This album of drawings has now been attributed to Fitch, based upon this information. This album has been processed as part of the Richmond Family Collection, Coll. 094, and also includes illustrations attributed to Rebecca Richmond.

The Fitch illustrations in the Richmond Family Collection include some travel sketches of Michigan scenes, but also include items identified for New England, and others that appear to be European. These are created in various types of media/support, including pencil on paper, watercolors on paper, and oil on canvas. A few of these drawings are dated, ranging from 1873-1876. To view these items, see Collection 094, Box 11. A rough inventory is available.