

Finding aid for the Cadette Everett Fitch collection

Collection 040

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department

April 1987

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Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical/Historical note</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents note</u>	4
<u>Administrative Information</u>	5
<u>Related Materials</u>	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	5
<u>Appendix</u>	6
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	7
<u>Series I. Nature Drawing, 1875</u>	7
<u>Series II. "A Few Idle Days" 1889</u>	8

Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator - Artist	Fitch, Cadette Everett, 1840-1927
Title	Cadette Everett Fitch collection
Date [inclusive]	1875-1889
Extent	1.21 Linear feet Two boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Cadette Everett Fitch (1840-1927) was a teacher, artist and community leader. The collection contains sketches by Fitch, illustrating nature and a seven-day boat trip down the Grand River. 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 the Grand River Valley, give insight into the area just before the turn of the century.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

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 briefly with Grand Rapids artist Marinus Harding [sic, Harting], who was also the instructor of Mathias Alten and other Grand Rapids associated artists of this generation. Outliving her husband by 29 years, Cadette Everett Fitch died at the age of 87.

Scope and Contents note

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.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department April 1987

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Cadette E. Fitch, 1927; accession number 00.000; old collection F7:A9

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Collection 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

Collection 094. 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.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History -- 19th Century
- Grand River (Mich.) -- Pictorial works

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.

Series I. Nature Drawing, 1875

Collection Inventory

Series I. Nature Drawing, 1875		
	Box	Folder
Usage Photocopies.	1	1

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

1 4

Scope and Contents note

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 and paper for sketches. Or, perhaps this was done at some later date. In 1999, 13 images in total were found here. Three 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 on 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(?)]

Series II. "A Few Idle Days" 1889

13. Back flyleaf – [Spider]

Loose items

3. “From the Shore of Lake Michigan”

4. [Butterfly]

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]

Series II. "A Few Idle Days" 1889

	Box	Folder
Usage Photocopies	1	2

Scope and Contents note

Illustration pages:

[1] Cover ill. “A Few Idle Days”.

[2]

[3]

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

Series II. "A Few Idle Days" 1889

[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(?)]

[52] [Culter(?) House]

[54] {House w wood walk path}

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

A Few Idle Days [original], 1889. [62 items including front and back (blan...

[58][Lake with boats]

[60] [Lake Michigan]

[62] [Lake Michigan]

Photographs of selected sketches from "A Few Idle Days," 1889.	1	3
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A Few Idle Days [original], 1889. [62 items including front and back (blank) covers.

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