
Guide to the Ina Coolbrith Circle Records, 1921-1969

Collection number: MS 457

California Historical Society

North Baker Research Library
San Francisco, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Ina Coolbrith Circle Records,

Date (inclusive): 1921-1969

Collection number: MS 457

Creator: Ina Coolbrith Circle, 1919-1969

Extent: 3 boxes

Repository: California Historical Society, North Baker Library
San Francisco, California 94105-4014

Language: English

Access

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Preferred Citation

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History

The Ina Coolbrith Circle was organized in 1919 in memory of Ina Coolbrith, California's first poet laureate. The stated purpose of the Circle was the study of the history and literature of California, the discussion of member's works, and the assembling and presentation of their

personal and literary reminiscences.

The Circle was patterned after the California Literature Society, which was itself an outgrowth of a neighborhood youth club founded by Ella Sterling Cummins Mighels, a California literary historian. The California Literature Society was informal and met once a month at Coolbrith's home until 1916.

The Ina Coolbrith Circle met once a month, first at the St. Francis Hotel, then in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library, and later at the Western Women's Club. More of a social club than a platform for established poets, the Circle sponsored lecture presentations, poetry readings, musical programs and annual poetry contests. The members also maintained a library and engaged in campaigns to save Ina Coolbrith Park in San Francisco, to name a Sierra Nevada peak after Ina Coolbrith, and to prevent the state legislature from naming an unpublished poet (and member of the legislature) California poet laureate.

Ina Coolbrith was living in New York at the time the Circle was formed and met with its members for the first time in 1920. In 1923 Coolbrith moved back to California and, between then and her death in 1928, journeyed each month to the St. Francis Hotel to read poetry, discuss literature, and listen to lectures. The Circle continued after Coolbrith's death largely through the efforts of Ina Peterson Cooke and Ina Cook Craig, her niece and grandniece respectively.

Ina Coolbrith, J. D. Rhodehamel and R. F. Wood. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young Univ. Press, 1973.

Scope and Content

The Ina Coolbrith Circle collection contains correspondence, announcements, newsletters, legal papers, financial statements and newspaper clippings concerning the Circle, its members and activities between 1921 and 1969.

- Bland, Henry Meade, 1863-1931
- Coolbrith, Ina Donna, 1841-1928
- Literature - Competitions
- Literature - Addresses, essays, lectures
- McGroarty, John Steven, 1862-1944
- Norris, Gordon W., 1907-1961
- Poetry - Addresses, essays, lectures
- Poets -- San Francisco
- Poets -- California
- Women Authors -- California
- Women in California

Material Transferred

Six photographs, three of Ina Coolbrith's grave, one of Anne Monroe, one of Ina Coolbrith Circle members in 1955, and one showing the Circle conferring the 1955 poetry contest award, have been transferred to California Historical Society photograph collection.

Box 1, Folder 1 **History of the Ina Coolbrith Circle**

Folder 2 **A Brief Biography of Ina Coolbrith by Ina Craig**

Folder 3 **Ina Coolbrith Circle Correspondence, 1921-1959**

Folder 4 **Ina Coolbrith Circle Correspondence, 1960-1969**

Folder 5 **Poetry, speeches, skits**

Folder 6 **Newspaper clippings, articles**

Othertype Binder **Poem, July Fourth, 1895 by Ina Coolbrith (handwritten)**

Photograph, document in Spanish concerning Monterey, California, 1830-1831

Box 2, Folder 7 **Ina Coolbrith Circle announcements, minutes, newsletters, and contests, 1927-1952**

- Folder 8 **Ina Coolbrith Circle announcements, minutes, newsletters, and contests, 1953-1957**
- Folder 9 **Ina Coolbrith Circle announcements, minutes, newsletters, and contests, 1958-1959**
- Folder 10 **Ina Coolbrith Circle announcements, minutes, newsletters, and contests, 1960-1969, nd**
- Folder 11 **Ina Coolbrith Circle legal papers, constitutions**
- Folder 12 **Ina Coolbrith Circle membership, 1930-1960**
- Folder 13 **Ina Coolbrith Circle financial reports, 1942-1962**
- Folder 14 **Miscellaneous**

- Box 3, Volume ~~Vol 1~~ **Ina Coolbrith Circle financial ledger, 1932-1951**

- Volume Vol 2 **Ina Coolbrith Circle Library ledger**

- Volume Vol 3 **Ina Coolbrith Circle meeting registrar, 1943-1944**

- Volume Vol 4 **Ina Coolbrith Circle meeting registrar, 1950-1958**

- Volume Vol 5 **Scrapbook with Ina Coolbrith Circle minutes, records, newspaper clippings, 1941-1944**

- Othertype Tape **Record of program from Southern California praising Ina Coolbrith, 1954 or 1955**