
Guide to the Ruth Horel Caskey Collection, 1890-1977

Historical Sites Society of Arcata
Phillips House Museum
Arcata, California

Contact Information:

- Historical Sites Society of Arcata
- Union and Seventh Streets
- P.O. Box 4521
- Arcata, California 95521
- Phone: (707) 822-4722
- Email: efb7001@axe.humboldt.edu

Processed by:

Edith Butler, MA

Date Completed:

1997

Encoded by:

Gabriela A. Montoya

© 1999 Historical Sites Society of Arcata. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: Ruth Horel Caskey Collection,

Date (inclusive): 1890-1977

Origination: Caskey, Ruth Horel

Extent: 25 cu. feet

Repository: Historical Sites Society of Arcata

Arcata, California

Language: English

Provenance

In 1977 Ruth Horel Caskey donated her possessions to the Historical Sites Society of Arcata. The collection remained in storage until 1992. The Historical Sites Society of Arcata now uses the household furnishings in its Phillips House Museum. This finding aid describes the 25 cubic feet manuscript portion of the collection which is housed at the Phillips House Museum. It is accessible by appointment with the archivist. The museum is open Sundays 1-4 pm and other times by appointment.

Access

Collection is open for research by appointment only.

Publication Rights

The society can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Ruth Horel Caskey Collection, Historical Sites Society of Arcata.

Biographical History

Dr. Francis R. and Mrs. Lois Horel moved to Arcata, CA in 1891. Dr. Horel was an 1885 graduate of Rush Medical College in Chicago. Dr. Horel established his medical practice at the Arcata Sanatorium. Daughters Ruth and Lois were born in 1895 and 1903 respectively. After her high school graduation in 1913 Ruth attended the University of California at Berkeley earning a bachelor's degree in 1917 and a Masters in Dental Pathology degree in 1918.

In 1920 Ruth Horel and Dr. Charles Rice Caskey were wed in Oklahoma City. They moved to Arcata in 1922 where Dr. Caskey joined Dr. Horel's medical practice. While living in Arcata Ruth taught piano. In 1927 Ruth and Dr. Caskey moved to Los Angeles. Dr. Caskey moved to Oklahoma in 1942 and the couple divorced a year later. Ruth continued living in Los Angeles. She continued a social work career that she began in 1931. Ruth's long association with David Seabury began in 1944. In 1950 she was employed with Mr. Seabury's psychology school, practice and publications. During the 1950s Ruth's employment with Mr. Seabury took her to Olga, WA for the summer months. Then in 1959 Mr. Seabury started to operate seasonally in Olga, WA and Tucson, AZ. After David Seabury died in 1960 Ruth continued editing his writings until 1967. She was living in Tucson at the time of her death in 1980.

Scope and Content

The collection represents Ruth's daily activities throughout her life. Its strengths are: photographs of Arcata and northwest California (1890 - 1920), documents and ephemera pertaining to Humboldt County and Dr. Horel's practice (1890-1925), Horel Family photographs and correspondence, Caskey Family photographs and correspondence, mid-20th Century practice of psychology and the development of self-help methodologies, travel itineraries and memorabilia (major trips to Europe in 1928 and Latin America in 1936), ephemera and travel materials from frequent journeys in the western United States, including Alaska, in the 1940s-1970s.

Additional research potential exists in the correspondence, diaries, notes and lists, and extensive accumulation of self-help literature. Ruth Horel Caskey kept paper records of every-day activities including materials pertaining to investment and real estate properties she owned, drafts of social correspondence, letters and notes she received (some from life-long correspondents), promotional information about books, programs and products for maintaining physical, spiritual, and psychological health. These materials reveal the person behind the artifacts: what she bought, what she aspired to, what she worried about, her striving for happiness.

When the processing project started in 1995 the materials were haphazardly stored in grocery store cardboard boxes. Information from a person who packed up Ruth Caskey's household in 1977 indicates that there was little or no organization to the materials in Ruth's home. Consequently processing consisted of grouping like materials together, paying closer attention to Humboldt County related items due to the likelihood that these would be more immediately useful to the Historical Sites Society of Arcata.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in fourteen series:

- Photographs
- Diaries
- Horel Family mementos and ephemera
- Humboldt County, CA ephemera
- Ruth Horel Caskey's career
- Ruth Horel Caskey's mementos
- Correspondence - received
- Financial and business
- Files
- Notes
- David Seabury materials
- Health, religion, spirituality, self-help materials
- Ephemera
- Travel materials

Photographs

Physical Description: About 1500 prints and about 300 negatives

Scope and Content Note

Major Categories:

- Families - Horel, O'Brien, Caskey (portraits and family activities)
 - Arcata
 - Northwest California
 - Schools
 - Logging and lumbering
 - Yosemite trip (there is an accompanying journal)
 - Locations outside Northwest California (Oklahoma, Wisconsin)
 - Portraits - identified persons (Fountain, Bull, Seely family members), unidentified persons
- The photographs have been cataloged at the item level on work sheets held in 3-ring binders.

Diaries

Physical Description: 1.1 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Ruth's diaries 1911 - 1969 with a few gaps

Lois Horel's journal of the 1902 family trip to Yosemite Valley.

Horel Family Mementos and Ephemera

Physical Description: .5 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Dr. Horel's office forms, and some prescription and billing records, canceled checks, stock certificate, correspondence, calling cards, theater program, membership cards, school mementos and report cards, hand drawn map of timberland holdings (in Oregon).

Humboldt County Ephemera

Physical Description: .25 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Billheads from businesses

County tax records including Road District Tax information

Arcata Union - records of transactions with this newspaper

Organizations - Arcata Women's Club, Clarke Memorial Museum, Humboldt County Historical Society, Historical Sites Society of Arcata.

Ruth Horel Caskey's Career

Physical Description: .9 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Piano teaching, published article on dentistry, social work - Motion Picture Relief Fund, LA County Hospital and Welfare Division

The materials from Ruth Caskey's association with David Seabury's professional activities are part and parcel of the materials generated by his school and private practice so they are part of the David Seabury Materials series.

Ruth Horel Caskey's Mementos

Physical Description: .3 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Blue prints for site in Los Angeles, house guest book, sheet music (a few selected pieces), personal items.

Correspondence - Received

Physical Description: 5.5 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Most of the correspondence received remains unsorted. Good portions of the correspondence from Lois Horel Knight (sister), C. Rice Caskey (husband) and from Humboldt County friends (Susie Baker Fountain, Beatrice Bull, Effie Vance Morgan) has been sorted.

Financial and Business

Physical Description: 2 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Information regarding timberland holdings and other investments, sales slips, canceled checks.

Files

Physical Description: 1 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Correspondence - Drafts of Ruth's outgoing correspondence

C. Rice Caskey's Career and Ephemera

Caskey Family Genealogy

Medical (pertaining to Ruth)

Linn Hull - Correspondence he sent to Ruth and materials related to his short story writing and publications

Personalogy Foundation

Divorces Anonymous

Clippings - from the Arcata Union and other Humboldt County newspapers

Notes

Physical Description: 2.5 cu ft.

Scope and Content Note

Notes about every aspect of Ruth's life including lists, phone messages, preliminary drafts of correspondence; the essence of her everyday life.

David Seabury Materials

Physical Description: 4 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Professional materials from David Seabury's career as a psychologist and from his Centralist School of Psychology, which was later called the David Seabury School of Psychology. Includes manuscripts for books, radio shows, and lectures, and correspondence. A small amount of biographical material about Mr. Seabury is here also.

It appears that the school's office became Ruth Caskey's responsibility after David Seabury's death in 1960. Ruth continued to work for the school and went on editing Mr. Seabury's books and articles until 1967.

Health, Religion, Spirituality, Self-Help, Etc. Materials

Physical Description: 3 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

Very wide selection of booklets, book notices, newsletters, programs.

Ephemera

Physical Description: 2 cu. ft.
(1 cu. ft. from California, 1 cu. ft. from elsewhere)

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of this material dates from 1940s - 1970s. Much of this is from southern California, significant portions from Arizona, Oregon, and Washington; and tidbits from other states. Consists of travel related items (maps, brochures, postcards, time tables), theater programs, business cards, political campaign literature, and promotional materials for Los Angeles' bids for water from elsewhere.

Travel Materials

Physical Description: 2 cu. ft.

Scope and Content Note

From major trips that Ruth took in the 1920s and 1930s

Europe - 1928 (includes brochures, travel literature, receipts, bill heads and other ephemera)

Mexico, Central America, and Columbia - 1936 (includes the same types of materials listed above)

One could nearly reconstruct Ruth's entire trips from these materials.