

Edith J. Coffelt papers
2010.0001

Finding aid prepared by Jason Phinney

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Center for Great Plains Studies

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Emporia State University

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Summary Information

Repository	Center for Great Plains Studies
Creator	Coffelt, Edith J., 1909-1994.
Title	Edith J. Coffelt papers
Date	Undated, 1941-1944, 1955, circa 1960-1994
Extent	1.0 Cubic feet
Language	English
Abstract	Daily diaries and other materials written by Edith J. Coffelt documenting daily life, travels, important addresses and birthdays, and conference notes. Also included is a photograph album.

Preferred Citation note

Edith J. Coffelt papers 2010.0001, Center for Great Plains Studies, Emporia State University

Coffelt, Edith J. 1909-1994

Edith J. Hanson (or Hansen) was born July 12, 1909 in Butler County, Kansas. She married Laurence Coffelt December 28, 1938 in either Cassoday or Strong City, Kansas. Edith and Laurence moved to Emporia, Kansas in the 1940s and lived at 119 South Commercial Street which was next door to the Flint Hills Art Gallery, Laurence's art studio. She maintained residence at 119 South Commercial Street until 1981 when she moved to 811 State Street Apartment 5. In 1988, she moved to Apartment 10 at 811 State Street. She was a member of the Free Methodist Church, where she served as church organist for several years. Edith died February 24, 1994 in Emporia and is buried at Memorial Lawn Cemetery.

Coffelt, Laurence H. 1910-1976

Laurence Coffelt was born September 3, 1910 in Sycamore Springs, Kansas. He married Edith Hansen (Hanson) December 28, 1938 in either Cassoday or Strong City, Kansas. Laurence and Edith moved to Emporia, Kansas in the 1940s. Laurence opened an art studio around 1962 at 117 South Commercial Street which was next door to the Coffelts' home. He was an artist who specialized in western paintings and sculptures. Laurence died April 6, 1976 in Emporia and is buried at Memorial Lawn Cemetery.

Flint Hills Art Gallery (Emporia, Kan.)

Art studio located at 117 South Commercial Street owned by Laurence Coffelt. It was located next door to the Coffelts home at 119 South Commercial Street. It was previously referred to as Flint Hills Studio from 1962-1964 and Flint Hills Art Studio from 1965-1967. It became known as Flint Hills Art Gallery in 1968.

Scope and Contents note

This collection documents the daily life and records of Edith and Laurence Coffelt. Materials include 35 daily diaries, a travel diary, an address book, a birthday organizer book, a photograph album, and notes from a conference.

The diaries document daily life for the Coffelts and later only Edith. Diary entries consistently begin with what time Edith got up in the morning. Entry topics include cooking and eating meals, how she slept, travels, getting Laurence (often referred to as L) off to work, going to church on Sundays, and weather. She records whether it was rainy, windy, snowing, cloudy, and etc. At the beginning of the 1941 diary, Edith talks about visiting Laurence's brother and sister-in-law in Verona, California for New Year's. April 6, 1976 is an entry of note as it records Laurence's death. Edith says "Laurence-My love, My life left me in shock all day-only the 1st of a long line of days to get thru without him." She talks about panicking and not getting much sleep for the next few days in her diary. After Laurence's passing, Edith often discusses visits and phone calls from friends and family. She also documents visiting and calling friends and family. For many years after his death, she documents how many years since his death on April 6 and how many years they would have been married on December 28. The April 6 entry in the diaries from 1989 and 1991 is particularly somber. On April 6, 1989 she states, "It was 13 years ago today that my world fell apart and still is not worth the living and seems to get worse. My only option is to keep struggling to cope and try not to think beyond the moment of the day."

The travel diary documents daily activities and weather on the Coffelts' travels around the country. Travels recorded include Cherry Valley, California, Phoenix, Arizona, New York City, Chandler, Casper, and Riverton, Wyoming, Ogallala Nebraska, Helena and Billings, Montana, Limon, Colorado, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Andrew Jackson's home. The entries are similar to the daily entries and typically begin with when Edith got up each morning. Edith also discusses meals eaten and places visited in each city.

The address book and birthday organizer book document addresses and birthdays of people important to the Coffelts. The front cover of the address book reads "Addresses All Kinds Put names addresses and phone #s in here." The address book includes information for many people and is organized in alphabetical order by last name. It also includes death notes and anniversary notes when applicable. The birthday organizer book also contains anniversaries of friends and family and the Coffelts' anniversary date. Edith writes on December 28 that "we had 37 years married." Many of the people in both the address book and birthday organizer book were mentioned in the diaries. The birthday organizer book contains names and birth years. Edith also recorded death dates and crossed out some of their names.

The photograph album includes photographs of Laurence and Edith and photographs of 15 Laurence Coffelt oil paintings and sculptures. Laurence was an artist and sculptor of western images. The paintings and sculptures photographed include "Cattle at Rest" oil painting from September, 1964 for Mr. and Mrs. Robert Vestring, "Heavy Surf" oil painting from September, 1964, "Packin' Out" oil painting from November, 1965, "The Toll Takers" painting from September, 1964, "Heads or Tails" oil painting from September, 1964, an unidentified sculpture of a cowboy from December, 1966, "The Odd Brand" painting from December, 1966 and possibly commissioned for Henrik Argom, an unidentified painting commissioned for Roy Frey, "Changin' Outfit" painting from December, 1966, another unidentified painting, "End of the Rope" oil painting, another "The Toll Takers" painting from September, 1964 that burned in the Strong City Hotel fire, "Morning in the Country" oil painting from September, 1964, "Waiting for the Mail" (Bronze) sculpture mounted on walnut base that is 9" tall, 20" Long, and weighs 28 lbs., and another unidentified painting of two men getting on horses. There is a photograph of Laurence on a cruise, one of Laurence and Edith in a church, one of Laurence and Edith sitting on a

couch, one of the gravestone for the two, a photograph of the Flint Hills Art studio from September, 1964, and one of an unidentified woman (possibly Edith) lying in bed.

The notes are from a religious conference Edith attended in October, 1993. She records notes on important talking points from the sermons. For example, on October 24, she records four talking points. The first point being "When you leave God out-there is no basis for value in our culture." Many of the notes are written in a similar manner.

Arrangement note

There was no original order to maintain. Items arranged into two series. The first series consists of 35 daily diaries, which are arranged chronologically. The second series consists of other records kept by Edith, including a birthday organizer book, photograph album, address book, travel diary, and notes from a conference, which are arranged by date.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Center for Great Plains Studies February 2014

Conditions Governing Access note

No restrictions.

Processing Information note

Processed by Jason Phinney, 2013-2014.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Flint Hills cowboys : tales from the tallgrass prairie by Jim Hoy. Life in the Saddle by Frank Collinson.
The F.M. Steele Photograph collection.

Separated Materials note

None.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Flint Hills Art Gallery.
- Flint Hills Art Studio.
- Flint Hills Studio.

Geographic Name(s)

- Emporia (Kan.) -- Climate.

Personal Name(s)

- Coffelt, Edith J., 1909-1994 -- Diaries.
- Coffelt, Edith J., 1909-1994 -- Photograph albums.
- Coffelt, Edith J., 1909-1994 -- Photographs.
- Coffelt, Edith J., 1909-1994 -- Travel.
- Coffelt, Edith J., 1909-1994.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976 -- Photographs.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. Packin' Out.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. Cattle at Rest.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. Changin' Outfit.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. End of the Rope.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. Heads or Tails.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. Heavy Surf.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. Morning in the Country.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. The Odd Brand.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. The Toll Takers.

- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976. *Waiting for the Mail*.
- Coffelt, Laurence H., 1910-1976.

Subject(s)

- Address books.
- Anniversaries.
- Art museums -- Kansas -- Emporia.
- Artists' studios -- Kansas -- Emporia.
- Artists.
- Birthday books.
- Birthdays.
- Cowboys in art.
- Husbands -- Death.
- Painters.
- Painting, American -- 20th century.
- Religious gatherings -- Christianity.
- Sculptors.
- Voyages and travels.
- Weather.

Collection Inventory

Daily Diaries 1941-1944, 1955, 1965-1994

Diary - 1941.

Diary - 1942.

Diary - 1943.

Diary - 1944.

Diary - 1955.

Diary - 1965.

Diary - 1966.

Diary - 1967.

Diary - 1968.

Diary -

Diary - 1969.

Diary - 1970.

Diary - 1971.

Diary - 1972.

Diary - 1973.

Diary - 1974.

Diary - 1975.

Diary - 1976.

Diary - 1977.

Diary - 1978.

Diary - 1979.

Diary - 1980.

Diary -

Diary - 1981.

Diary - 1982.

Diary - 1983.

Diary - 1984.

Diary - 1985.

Diary - 1986.

Diary - 1987.

Diary - 1988.

Diary - 1989.

Diary - 1990.

Diary - 1991.

Diary - 1992.

Diary -

Diary - 1993.

Diary - 1994.

Other Records Undated, circa 1960-1994

Birthday organizer book - Undated.

Photograph album - Undated, 1964-1966, 1975-1976.

Address book - Circa 1960-1994.

Travel diary - 1961-1963.

Notes from conference - 1993.