

8-2017

02.001 Edith Lesley Wolfard Papers, 1909-1938

Julienne Stenberg

Marie Wasnock

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/finding_aids



Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stenberg, Julienne and Wasnock, Marie, "02.001 Edith Lesley Wolfard Papers, 1909-1938" (2017). *Finding Aids*. 2.
http://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/finding_aids/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections and Archives at DigitalCommons@Lesley. It has been accepted for inclusion in Finding Aids by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Lesley. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lesley.edu.

Edith Lesley Wolfard, 1909-1938

By Julienne Stenberg (2007) and Marie Wasnock (2011)

Collection Overview

Title: Edith Lesley Wolfard, 1909-1938

ID: 02/001

Creator: Edith Lesley Wolfard (1872-1953)

Extent: 2 Boxes

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by subject and then chronologically as applicable within each folder.

Date Acquired: 10/03/2007

Languages: English

Scope and Contents of the Materials

This collection consists of several different types of documents pertaining to Edith Lesley Wolfard and the administration of the Lesley School prior to its transition to a college in 1943. The documents are a mixture of Edith's personal items and those pertaining to the administration of the school. Included are several articles written during her lifetime chronicling the founding of the school as well as her connection to Bangor, Maine. Budgets from 1925 to 1945 demonstrate Lesley's incoming and outgoing financial situation. Correspondence highlighting the shift of Lesley School to Lesley College written by Edith to the Treasurer are included. Also included are letters to and from Edith Lesley's sister, Olive as well as correspondence and information pertaining to Gertrude Malloch, the Principal and then Chief Administrator of the Lesley School. Photographs from Lesley's childhood home, and photos of herself as found in yearbooks are also available. Biographical information about Edith, a speech she gave, as well as her death certificate complete the collection.

Biographical Note

Edith Leah Lesley was born on January 27, 1872 in what is now the country of Panama. Her parents, Alonzo Lesley and Rebecca Cousens Lesley were both originally from the state of

Maine. In 1874, the Lesley family immigrated back to the United States, moving to Bangor, Maine. Why the family had remained for so long in Panama is unknown, but records show that by September of 1875, Alonzo had started a shoe business in Bangor. The family rented a house on 42 Main Street, while they waited for the business to open in the fall. In December of that same year, Edith's younger sister, Olive May was born. It seems likely that with the birth of Olive, the family felt the need to move to a larger house and so by 1879 were living in a house on Adams Street.

Edith's early education is relatively vague. If she had gone to first grade, she would have been at the right age in the fall of 1878 or 1879. However, there is evidence of Edith having graduated from elementary school in June 1887. Records also found at Radcliffe College indicate that she was prepared at Miss Newman's in Bangor. At this time the family had been living in a larger house on Broadway keeping boarders, many of whom were connected to kindergarten teaching.

About 1889 the family sold their home in Bangor and moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts. The reason for this move is unclear, though the timing may indicate a desire on Edith's part to pursue teacher training in Boston. In the late 1890s, she was working in the new educational program known as kindergarten in the Riverside and Houghton schools in Cambridge. Edith attended, as a special student, Radcliffe College where she studied philosophy.

In 1909, after completing her study at Radcliffe, she decided to open The Lesley Normal School. The first day of classes began on September 18, 1909. The first class with eleven students graduated at the First Parish Church in Harvard Square on June 10, 1911. The school was intended as a two-year special training school for young ladies who were interested in teaching kindergarten. Edith was one of the first teachers at the school with a curriculum consisting of philosophy, child study, and the theories and methods of Friedrich Froebel. Her sister Olive taught folk dancing, games, and storytelling. In 1918, the Department of Domestic Science was created offering a three-year course in Home Economics. The Lesley Normal School was renamed the Lesley School.

Edith married Merl Ruskin Wolfard in 1912. They met while Wolfard was a boarder in her family's home. Edith taught at the school until the 1930s and then remained active in the administration of the school until the late 1940s. Beginning in the late 1930s, Edith appointed Gertrude Malloch as chief administrator as her health began to decline. In 1941, the first recorded meeting of the Corporation and the Board of Trustees took place. Edith numbered among the members of the Trustees, and her husband, Merl Wolfard was named vice president of the board. Gertrude Malloch was named Principal of the Lesley School. The Corporation was given the task of taking over the Lesley School in order to "run a school or college with all the facilities incidental thereto." The School was suffering a decline in both enrollment and financial generation at this time so that in 1942, Edith Lesley loaned the school \$8,300. The School was then able to, in 1943, transition to Lesley College with Marguerite Franklin as the first President. Edith's influence by this time had dwindled, but she maintained interest in The Lesley Camp and the expansion of the school. The Lesley Camp founded in the 1920s by Edith and her husband Merl was created to allow teenage girls over the age of sixteen to become involved in "purposeful activity" that "prepares them to use what they have learned in some practical way."

She continued to live in the house at 29 Everett Street with Merl until her death on May 16, 1953. Edith and Merl had no children.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions: In Library Use Only.

Use Restrictions: The copyright law of the United States, Title 17, U.S. Code, governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of the specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction of copyrighted material is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research" (17 U.S.C. § 108). Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by copyright beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owner. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user. Copyright Owner: Lesley University; Copyright Contact: The Lesley University Archives.

Acquisition Method: Materials were collected throughout the existence of Lesley University from various offices and deposited in the archives through several different accessions. The majority of the materials came from two accessions (2007-01 and 2007-03) that were collected by both the Office of Alumni Relations and the President's Office.

Processing Information: Processed by Julienne Stenberg in 2007 and Marie Wasnock in November 2011.

Finding Aid Revision History: Finding aid to be revised as additional materials are accessioned into collection.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1: Annual Reports / Budgets, 1925-1941

Folder 1: A Survey of the Educational Work and Facilities of the Lesley School, 1940-1941

Folder 2: A Survey of the Educational Work and Facilities of the Lesley School, 1940-1941

Folder 3: A Survey of the Educational Work and Facilities of the Lesley School, 1940-1941

Folder 4: Budget, 1925

Folder 5: Budget, 1926

Folder 6: Budget, 1927
Folder 7: Budget, 1928
Folder 8: Budget, 1929
Folder 9: Budget, 1930
Folder 10: Budget, 1931
Folder 11: Budget, 1932

Box 2: Budgets / Correspondence / Subject Files, 1875-1996

Folder 1: Budget, 1933
Folder 2: Budget, 1934
Folder 3: Budget, 1935
Folder 4: Budget, 1936
Folder 5: Budget, 1937
Folder 6: Budget, 1938
Folder 7: Budget, 1944-1945
Folder 8: Correspondence, 1931-1943
Folder 9: Faculty, 1933, 1934, 1937
Folder 10: The Lesley Camp, Newfound Lake, Bridgewater, NH, undated
Folder 11: Lesley Family History, 1755-1956
Folder 12: Lesley, Olive, 1912-1950
Folder 13: Malloch, Gertrude, 1943-1959
Folder 14: President's House, 29 Everett St., 1875-1930
Folder 15: News articles about Lesley students and alumna, 1923-1938
Folder 16: News advertisements for the Lesley School, 1915-1938
Folder 17: Newspaper Commencement announcements, 1916-1932
Folder 18: Photographs, 1880-1943
Folder 19: Speeches, 1934?
Folder 20: Wolfard, Edith Lesley, 1891-1996