

Clara Wolverson Papers, 1892-1930

Collection number: TCNJ002

Accession number: 2001.04

Collection title: Clara Wolverson Papers

Dates: 1892-1930

Creator/Collector: Clara J. Wolverson

Extent: .5 linear foot (1 document box)

Repository: Archives and Special Collections, R. Barbara Gitenstein Library, The College of New Jersey, PO Box 7718, Ewing, NJ 08628-0718

Abstract: Clara J. Wolverson, born 1879, attended Trenton Public Schools, the New Jersey State Normal School, and University of Pennsylvania. She started her teaching career in Passaic County schools, then taught for approximately 50 years at Trenton Junior High School No. 1. Her collection encompasses materials from her early education documenting her grades and teachers starting in 1892, and first few years of teaching with event programs and student notes until approximately 1903.

Language(s): English

Acquisition information: Unknown

Processing information: The collection was processed in December 2023, by Debra Schiff and Kerin Shellenbarger. This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services IMLS grant number ST-252518-OMS-22.

Condition/conservation notes: Most of the materials are in good condition, however the "Grades Book" has rubber band residue on cover, and the 1901 receipt has significant transfer of ink from a modern photocopy.

Access restrictions: This collection is open for research.

Physical access restrictions: The items in this collection may be used by patrons who abide by the Archives and Special Collections Use Policy of the R. Barbara Gitenstein Library at TCNJ.

Technical access restrictions: Portions of the collection have been digitized (materials in folders 10, 11, and 13 have not been digitized) and are available for viewing in the library on a provided computer, or at: <https://atom.tcnj.edu/index.php/Clara-Wolverson-Papers>

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Preferred citation: TCNJ002 Clara Wolverton Papers, The College of New Jersey, R. Barbara Gitenstein Library: Archives and Special Collections.

Related collections: [future Normal School Collection]

Separated material: 6 books:

Uarda : a romance of ancient Egypt, by Georg Ebers, 1876; General Collection PT1851.E5 U33 1876

Simple experiments in chemistry, by John F. Woodhull, 1905; Archives - Historical Textbooks QD43 .W9

Everyday problems in science, by Charles John Pieper and Wilbur Lee Beauchamp, 1925; Archives - Historical Textbooks Q161 .P5 1925

General science : with experimental and project studies, by Garfield A. Bowden, 1923; Archives - Historical Textbooks Q161 .B7 1923

Ivanhoe, by Walter Scott, 1900 (deaccessioned 2023)

Elements of general science, by Otis William Caldwell, and William Lewis Eikenberry, 1924 (deaccessioned 2023)

Published descriptions: <https://atom.tcnj.edu/index.php/Clara-Wolverton-Papers>

Location of originals: Room 410, Archives and Special Collections, Gitenstein Library, TCNJ

Publication note: None known as of 12/21/2023.

Biographical information/Organizational history:

Clara Johnson Wolverton was born on December 3, 1879, in Stockton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, to Sarah Catherine Cole and Gabriel Wolverton. (Note: Wolverton is also sometimes spelled Woolverton in some sources). At the time of her birth, her parents were in their 40s and had two other surviving children - brothers Harry and Gabriel Jr. Some time in the 1880s, the family moved to Trenton, NJ where her father and brother worked as harness makers. Her

earliest schooling is unknown, but she began keeping a meticulous record of her grades and teachers' names while attending Centennial Grammar School from 1892 to 1894 (the current equivalent of middle school), then Trenton High School from 1894 to 1898, where she majored in English.

In the fall of 1898, she enrolled in New Jersey State Normal School. She was given the nickname "Toddie" by her peers and her favorite occupation was "performing experiments." According to the school's Grade and Report Book, she does well academically and is "Quick to understand a child's point of view and to help, yet her manner seems unsympathetic, due to lack of facial expression. Ernest and shows some good ideas of teaching." Despite the negative evaluation of her manner and expression, she was immediately placed in a teaching position at Bound Brook Public School just before her graduation in February 1901. For the next two years, she was well-reviewed by her superiors and admired by her students in Passaic County Public Schools in Manchester Township and Haledon Borough. Finally, In 1904, she accepted a permanent position in Trenton Public Schools.

She continued to live with her family in Trenton, which, at times, included her brother Harry and nephew Austin Wolverton. Her brother Gabriel Jr. worked in the insurance business as did Austin. Her father died in the early 1900s, and by 1910, she was living with her widowed mother at 248 Pearl Street in Trenton where she continued to live for several decades. In the 1920s, while teaching, she also attended the University of Pennsylvania and received a degree in education.

According to her obituary, she spent 50 years teaching science at Trenton Junior High School No. 1, which opened in 1916, and was later renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School (closed in 2007). She died May 8, 1964, and was buried in Riverview Cemetery, Trenton, New Jersey.

Scope and Content notes:

The Clara Wolverton Papers contain materials from her early education beginning in 1892, through Normal School, and her earliest teaching years ending in 1903. It comprises personal items such as her grades book, greeting cards, and notes of affection from her students, as well as professional items such as her teaching contracts and letters of recommendation, and also printed commencement programs and tickets and clippings. There are only a few items after this time period, and they document her involvement in the Red Cross and Botanical Society of Pennsylvania.

There are no materials related to teaching at Trenton Public Schools or attending University of Pennsylvania.

Her collection also initially contained six books, four of which were cataloged and added to the Historical Textbooks and General Collections of Gitenstein Library, and two were deaccessioned due to duplication.

Series I: Diaries

Clara Wolverton's "Grades Book" is a handwritten notebook documenting her teachers' names and the grades she earned in each subject from Centennial Grammar School 1892 - 1894, Trenton High School 1894 - 1898, through New Jersey State Normal School 1898 - February 1901. There are some additional loose pages with calculations and class lists also housed with the book.

Series II: Correspondence

A combination of personal and professional materials comprise this series which encompasses her childhood through early career, including a letter from Edna James Blain Smith to Clara's mother asking permission for her to spend the night in order to view the inauguration parade in January 1896, and several recommendation letters from school superintendents and teachers contracts from Bound Brook Public School, Manchester Township School, and Passaic County Schools. Also included are several affectionate "Haledon Students' Love Notes to Teacher" from 1901.

Series III: Financials

The financial materials include bills addressed to Clara's father Gabriel Wolverton for the use of books at New Jersey State Normal School for \$1.00 per quarter, a receipt for class of 1901 dues, and receipts for a subscription to the *Signal*.

Series IV: Ephemera

This series contains a wide range of materials from her high school through professional years. From Trenton High School, there are tickets and programs for graduation exercises which contain lists of names of graduating students. From State Normal School, there are Matriculation (enrollment) cards, performance programs, and graduation event materials starting in 1898 until 1901. Of particular note are hand-written song lyrics to "Farewell to State Schools" and "Seniors" sung to the tune of Yankee Doodle, as well as printed songs for holidays and February Class of 1901. From Wolverton's early teaching years, there are event programs from her school, social, and possibly church activities. In addition, there are some personal items including a business card for her brother G. Wolverton Jr. at Prudential Life Insurance Company, a Pennsylvania Railroad Company Photographic Monthly Commutation ticket from 1929 when she may have still been a student at University of Pennsylvania, Red Cross membership certificates during WWI, and Botanical Society of Pennsylvania meeting programs and studies from the early 1920s. It is unknown if Clara Wolverton attended these programs for pleasure or part of her continued education to become a science teacher.

Series V: Photographs

The photographs are of just two subjects: an informal baby picture of nine-month-old June E. Wolverton, Wolverton's great-niece (child of Austin), and a double studio portrait of Clara Wolverton appearing in 1920s dress - the same photograph was used on her 1929 railroad pass

Series VI: Forms

These are various blank forms for the observation of school children, likely from student teaching or Normal School class work.

Series VII: Clippings

The newspaper clippings are about the State Normal School, mostly graduation and class day exercises 1900-1901, profiles of faculty, and engagement and wedding announcements, likely of classmates (but possibly of former students or peers).

Series VIII: Realia

There are 2 brass name stencils for S. E. Wolverton and S. C. Wolverton. These stencils likely pre-date Clara Wolverton, (possibly mid-19th century on), and their original owner is unknown, though her mother's married initials start with S. C..

Organization and arrangement: The Clara Wolverton Papers are arranged in eight series: diaries, correspondence, financials, ephemera, photographs, forms, clippings, and realia in one box. The contents of each folder are arranged chronologically when known.

Subject headings:

Personal Names:

Wolverton, Clara, 1879-1964

Corporate Names:

New Jersey State Normal School (Trenton, N.J.)

Genres:

Correspondence

Ephemera

Newspaper clippings

Photographs

Places:

Trenton (N.J.)

Other Subjects:

Teachers

Students

Container list:

Series I: Diaries

Box 1 Folder 1: Grades book, 1892-1901

Series II: Correspondence

Folder 2: Personal correspondence, recommendation letters, and teachers contracts, 1896-1903

Folder 3: Gift and greeting cards, 1898 & undated

Folder 4: Haledon students' love notes, 1901

Series III: Financials

Folder 5: Bills and receipts for Normal School books, class dues, and Signal subscription, 1898-1900

Series IV: Ephemera

Folder 6: Trenton High School commencement programs and tickets, 1895-1899

Folder 7: Normal School Matriculation cards, 1898-1890

Folder 8: Normal School performance and commencement programs and tickets, 1898-1901

Folder 9: Normal School songs, 1901

Folder 10: Haledon School No. 2 and Cedar Cliff Church performance and commencement programs and tickets, 1901-1909

Folder 11: Personal items, including monthly Pennsylvania RR photo pass, brother's business card, and performance programs, c. 1899-1929

Folder 12: Red Cross membership cards and certificate, 1917, 1918, 1930

Folder 13: Botanical Society of Pennsylvania meeting programs, 1919-1922

Series V: Photographs

Folder 14: Portraits of Clara Wolverton, and baby June E. Wolverton, c.1926-1929

Series VI: Forms

Folder 15: Normal School study of children blank forms, 1901

Series VII: Clippings

Folder 16: Normal School clippings, 1900-1904

Folder 17: Classmate's nuptials clippings, 1900-1913

Series VIII: Realia

Folder 18: Wolverton Brass name stencils, 19th century