

Neva Whaley Harding Papers

COLLECTION SUMMARY

IDENTIFIER

MA 130

TITLE

Neva Whaley Harding Papers

DATES

1868-1987

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

4.39 linear feet [5 document cases, 1 half document case, 1 newspaper box]
3 audiocassettes, 15 audio reels, 135 photographs/negatives

LANGUAGE

English

REPOSITORY

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections
Hilton M. Briggs Library (SBL) Room 241, Box 2115
1300 North Campus Drive, Brookings, SD 57007
Phone: 605-688-5094
Email: arcrefs@sdstate.edu

ACCESS NOTE

Open. This material does not circulate and may be used in-house only.

PREFERRED CITATION

Name of item. MA 130, box #, folder #, Neva Whaley Harding Papers, South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections, Hilton M. Briggs Library, Brookings, South Dakota.

ABSTRACT

Neva Marie Whaley Harding, born in 1872 in Illinois and later settling in South Dakota, lived a life marked by community engagement and cultural contribution. After she married Albert S. Harding, the couple became an integral part of Brookings, South Dakota, with Neva notably founding the Brookings Women's Club and contributing to St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Jane Alexander was born in Brookings, South Dakota to Ruth Ann and William Alexander. She began her journey of community engagement during her high school years, forming a lasting friendship with Neva Harding. This connection inspired her to delve into Neva's life, eventually leading to the expansion of Neva's autobiography.

The Neva Whaley Harding Papers, curated by Jane Alexander, provide a detailed account of Neva's life, family background, and community contributions. Comprising manuscripts, correspondence, interviews, certificates, diplomas, and audio recordings, the collection offers insights into Neva's formative years, education, and active involvement in her community. Neva's role in founding the Brookings Women's Club and her dedication to St. Paul's Episcopal Church are highlighted, alongside

her later passion for painting and writing. Through Jane Alexander's curation, the collection stands as a testament to Neva's lasting impact and legacy in Brookings, South Dakota.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Neva Marie Whaley Harding was born on June 5, 1872, in Rock Island County, Illinois, to Josiah and Susan Whaley. In 1880, the family relocated to De Smet, South Dakota, where Neva completed her education at De Smet High School in 1889. She then embarked on a teaching career in Kingsbury County before pursuing higher education at South Dakota Agricultural College, now South Dakota State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Domestic Economy in 1897.

On July 6, 1898, Neva married Albert S. Harding, and they settled in Brookings, South Dakota, where Albert served as a professor in the history department at South Dakota State College. The couple adopted a son, Robert Eugene Harding, in 1909.

Throughout her life, Neva played an active role in the educational and cultural life of the community. She was instrumental in founding the Brookings Women's Club, serving as its inaugural president in 1900, and remained an active member throughout her life. Neva also contributed to St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Guild.

In her later years, Neva developed a passion for painting, creating numerous artworks that reflected the beauty of her surroundings. She also chronicled her life experiences in an autobiography titled "I Recall Pioneer Days in South Dakota," offering insights into the region's pioneer era.

Governor Richard Kneip honored Neva's remarkable life by proclaiming June 5, 1974, as "Neva Harding Day," recognizing her enduring influence and legacy. Neva passed away on January 5, 1978, in Brookings, South Dakota, at the remarkable age of 105.

Jane Alexander was born in Brookings, South Dakota, to Ruth Ann and William Alexander. She began her journey of community engagement during her high school years while volunteering at the Brookings Retirement Center. Here she formed a lasting friendship with Neva Harding. This connection inspired her to delve into Neva's life, eventually leading to the expansion of Neva's autobiography.

Jane graduated from Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where she majored in history. Alongside her studies, she dedicated her time to volunteering as a tutor and aide to children in the Holyoke Schools.

After graduating in 1980, Jane embarked on a career dedicated to helping others. She worked at the Parker Street shelter with unhoused adults in Boston, and later at the Pine Street Inn women's clinic. It was during her time at the women's clinic that she, along with her colleague Eileen Reilly, conceptualized the idea of a daytime shelter for women. In 1982, they brought this vision to life, establishing the Women's Lunch Place in the basement of the Church of the Covenant, with Jane serving as the Executive Director for the next two decades.

Throughout her career, Jane received numerous accolades for her work, including the Mount Holyoke College Mary Lyon Award and the Boston Celtic's "Heroes Among Us" award. In 2002, she transitioned to roles at Renewal House and East Boston Ecumenical Community, while also volunteering for disaster relief efforts with the Red Cross and providing medical aid in Haiti.

In 2004, Jane married Mark Johnson of Jamaica Plain, and they relocated to New Orleans in 2007. There, she pursued her passion for social work, earning her master's degree from Tulane School of Social Work. She then served as the Executive Director of Churches United in Moorhead, Minnesota, until 2016, where she pioneered initiatives for permanent housing and winter expansion at the shelter.

Jane returned to Massachusetts, settling in Dracut with her sister Sarah Alexander. There, she devoted herself to caregiving, providing assistance to elderly individuals and their families.

Jane passed away on July 26, 2022, in Lowell, Massachusetts.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The Neva Whaley Harding Papers, curated by Jane Alexander, offer a comprehensive exploration of Neva's life, family heritage, and community engagement. The collection is composed of various mediums like manuscripts, correspondence, interviews, certificates, diplomas, and audio recordings, providing insights into Neva's life from her formative years to later life stages.

Topics covered include personal experiences, family history, genealogy, education, community involvement, and social issues. Interviews on open reel audiotape delve into Neva's personality, philosophy, and encounters, alongside reflections on significant historical events such as the Depression and World Wars. The collection also contains material related to Neva and her husband Albert's college education at South Dakota Agricultural College, providing insight into college life during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Through Jane Alexander's efforts, the collection serves as a testament to Neva's legacy and her influence on both her family and community.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

PERSONS

- Alexander, Jane
- Harding, Neva Marie Whaley, 1872-1978
- Harding, Albert Spencer, 1867-1952 Harding, Robert Eugene

SUBJECTS

- Women pioneers -- South Dakota -- Biography
- Women in community development -- South Dakota -- Biography
- Women's clubs -- South Dakota -- History
- Episcopal Church -- South Dakota -- History
- South Dakota State College -- Alumni and alumnae

ACCESS

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS

This collection is open to researchers without restrictions. The materials in the Archives do not circulate and may be used in-house only.

Researchers conducting extensive research are asked to make an advance appointment to access archival material. Please call or e-mail prior to visiting the collection and indicate as much detail as possible about a particular topic and intended use.

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Requests to publish should be arranged with the SDSU Archives and Special Collections.

CONTAINER LIST

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	1	Address book	undated
1	2	After College - Miscellaneous information	1976
1	3	Bean Family Genealogy	undated
1	4	Bibliography	undated
1	5	Biography of Nevia Whaley Harding by Jane Alexander	1970s
1	6	Blizzard	1880s
1	7	Book reading after college	undated
1	8	Brookings, South Dakota	undated
1	9	Child of the Prairie (homesteading) - Life on the claim	1970s
1	10	Church	undated
1	11	Church Guild and Women's Clubs: Organization of the Small-Town Midwestern Woman in the 1920s and 1930s by Jane Alexander	1980
1	12	College years	undated
1	13	Comments about America	undated
1	14	Concerning Neve's Death	1978
1	15	Correspondence: From S. Eldred to Albert Harding	1900 June 3
1	16	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Bill Anderson	1978
1	17	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Bob Harding	1977-1978
1	18	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Elizabeth Boruff	1978 April 23

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
1	19	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Dayton W. Canady, Director, South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs	1976 November 22
1	20	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Grandma Harding [Neva]	undated
1	21	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from L.L. Cornelius, Rock Island County Historical Society	1978 July 13
1	22	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Marjorie Whaley Tuzik	1978 January 13
1	23	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from M.E. (Merrill E.) Jarchow	1978 January 8
1	24	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Mr. and Mrs. Cy Whaley	1978 January 6
1	25	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Mr. Clare Johnson	1978 March
1	26	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Mrs. C. A. Balof	1978 February 3
1	27	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Mrs. Wright	1978 February 5
1	28	Correspondence: To Jame Alexander from Mrs. Walter (Lavonne) Eifert	1977-1978
1	29	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Robert L. Craig	1978
1	30	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Roger D. Bridges, Illinois State Historical Library	1978 June 12
1	31	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from unknown	1978 February 8
1	31	Correspondence: To Jane Alexander from Wayne Hauschild	1978 February 7
1	33	Correspondence: To Steve Krog from Jane Alexander	1978 January 6
2	1	Dakota Railroads	undated
2	2	Depression of the 1930s	undated
2	3	Dying	undated
2	4	Evenson, A.D. - Interview	1978 January 13
2	5	Family Background	undated
2	6	Family Moves to Oklahoma	undated
2	7	Father and Son Relationship	undated
2	8	Genealogy of Whaleys and Beans	undated
2	9	Grandchildren	undated
2	10	Grant - An Expansion and Revision of "I Recall Pioneer Days in South Dakota" by Neva Harding	1976-1977
2	11	Green, Eric and Elsie - Interview	1970s
2	12	Harding, Albert S.	1939, 1977-1978
2	13	Harding, Bob and Neva Interview	1977 June
2	14	Hired men and Plough boys	undated
2	15	I Recall Pioneer Days in South Dakota by Neva Harding	1961
2	16	Illinois Years	1976
2	17	In Search of a New Home	undated
2	18	Interviews with Neva	1976-1977
2	19	Lacher Interview	1978 February 7

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
2	20	Life in De Smet, South Dakota	1930, 1976
2	21	Life on the Claim	undated
3	1	Married Life	undated
3	2	Middle Age	undated
3	3	Manuscript Introduction and Outline	undated
3	4	Motherhood	1977
3	5	Neva Harding Manuscript - Rough Draft	undated
3	6	Neva's Parents	undated
3	7	Neva's Personality	undated
3	8	Neva's Philosophy	undated
3	9	Neva's Yearbook	1947-1949
3	10	Not Joining Organizations	undated
3	11	Not Worrying	undated
3	12	Notes from Albert to Neva	1890s circa, 1892, 1900
3	13	Old Age	1977-1978
3	14	Paintings	1958, undated
3	15	Pioneering	undated
3	16	Photographs - Albert Spencer Harding	undated
3	17	Photographs: Cemetery and Gravestone	1977-1978, undated
3	18	Photographs: Homes and family treasures	1978
3	19	Photographs: Jane Alexander, Robert Harding	1977-1978
3	20	Photographs: Neva Marie Whaley Harding	1977-1978
3	21	Photographs: Whaley Family	undated
3	22	Properties of Whaley's and Bean's	undated
3	23	Questions for Neva	undated
3	24	Railroad - Minnesota to Dakota	undated
3	25	Research notes	1977-1979
3	26	Roomers	undated
4	1	Sorenson, Alvida	undated
4	2	South Dakota Maps	1905, 1966, 1977
4	3	South Dakota State College in later years	1976
4	4	St. Paul's Episcopal Church History	1947, 1975
4	5	Steam boating - Upper-Mississippi	undated
4	6	Suffrage	undated
4	7	Teaching	undated
4	8	Teaching Certificate - Susan F. Bean	1868 December 19
4	9	Thornburn's Interview	1970s

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
4	10	Transcription of Tape T-1 - Interview with Neva Harding	1977 June 17
4	11	Transcription of Tape T-2 - Interview with Neva Harding	1976 October
4	12	Transcription of Tape T-3 - Interview with Neva Harding	1976 Fall
4	13	Transcription of Tape T-4 - Interview with Neva Harding	1977 June 20
4	14	Transcript of Tape T-5 - Interview with Neva Harding	1976 October 11
4	15	Transcriptions	1979 January 21
4	16	Unawareness of Major Events	undated
4	17	Whaley Family	1870-1878, 1893, 1960, 1978
4	18	Whaley, Marshall Henry	undated
4	19	Wilder, Laura Ingalls and family	1973, undated
4	20	Women's Clubs	1950-1978, undated
4	21	World War I and II	undated
4	22	Young, Gertrude Stickney	undated
4	23	Young Married Life	undated
4	24	50th Wedding Anniversary	1948 July 6
5	1	Certificate of Birth - Neva Marie Whaley	1872 June 5
5	2	College Years - Sioux Falls Argus Leader articles	1893
5	3	Correspondence: To Charles H. Hatfield from Albert Harding	1893 April 23
5	4	Neva and Albert Harding - Alumni of SDSC	1938, 1943, 1947
5	5	Certificate of Marriage - Albert and Neva Harding	1878 July 6
5	6	Women's Clubs	1923-1938
6	1	Interview with Neva Harding	1977 June 17
6	2	Interview with the Evensons about Neva Harding, Interview with Robert Harding	1977 September 23
6	3	Interview with Adelaide Anderson about Neva Harding, Interview with Neva Harding	1978 January 12, 1976 October
6	4	Interview with Neva Harding	1976 Fall
6	5	Interview with Eric and Elsie Green by Jane Alexander	1977 June
6	6	Interview with Neva Harding by Jane Alexander	1977 June 20
6	7	Interview with Neva Harding by Jane Alexander	1976 Fall
6	8	Interview with Abbey and Father Thorburn	1978 January 17
6	9	Interview with Neva Harding	1976 October 10
6	10	Interview with Alvida Sorenson	1978 January 19
6	11	Interview with the Lachers	undated
6	12	Interview with Neva Harding	1969 August 25
6	13	Interview with Neva Harding	1976 September 28
6	14	Interview with Neva Harding and son, Bob Harding	1977 July 20
6	15	Interview with Bob Harding	undated
7	1	College Years - Collegian articles	1890-1897, undated

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
7	2	De Smet (South Dakota) Grade School Diploma - Neva M. Whaley	1889 May 29
7	3	Diploma - Agricultural College of South Dakota - Albert Spencer Harding Bachelor of Science in Agriculture	1892 August 4
7	4	Diploma - Agricultural College of South Dakota - Neva Marie Whaley Bachelor of Science in Domestic Economy	1897 July 1
7	5	Diploma - Universitas Republicae Nebraska - Albert Spencer Harding Master of Arts	1897 June 10
7	6	Miltonian Literary Society Certificate - Albert Sidney Harding - Fellow of the Miltonian Literary Society of the South Dakota Agricultural College	1892 August 3
7	7	Miltonian Literary Society Certificate - Neva Maria Whaley - Fellow of the Miltonian Literary Society of the South Dakota Agricultural College	1897 July 1