

Mary Elrod Ferguson Papers, 1898-1975

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Ferguson, Mary Elrod, 1889-1975
Title	Mary Elrod Ferguson Papers
Dates	1898-1975 (inclusive) 1898 1975
Quantity	2 linear feet
Collection Number	Mss 205 (collection)
Summary	Mary Elrod Ferguson was a University of Montana graduate, instructor, and administrator. The collection contains the personal and professional records produced and collected by Mary Elrod Ferguson during her years at the university in Missoula and in dispatching the affairs of her father, Morton Elrod.
Repository	University of Montana, Mansfield Library, Archives and Special Collections Archives and Special Collections Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library University of Montana 32 Campus Dr. #9936 59812-9936 Missoula, MT Telephone: 406-243-2053 Fax: 406-243-4067 library.archives@umontana.edu
Access Restrictions	Researchers must use collection in accordance with the policies of Archives and Special Collections, the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, and The University of Montana--Missoula.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Mary Elrod Ferguson was born in Bloomington, Illinois, in 1889 to Morton John Elrod and Emma Hartshorn Elrod. After her family moved to Missoula, Montana, in 1898, she attended the preparatory school at the University of Montana, then earned a BS in Biology in 1911. She was a founding member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority on campus. From 1918 to 1920, she was an instructor in zoology at the University of Montana. From 1930 to 1933, she was secretary to the Dean of Women. In 1934, she earned an MA from Columbia University's Teachers College. She became acting Dean of Women at the University of Montana in 1935 and served in that position until 1946. From 1946 until her retirement in 1957, she was the assistant director of the Museum and Northwest History Collections at the University. She was active in the American Association of University Women, the American Association of Deans of Women, the State Federation of Women's Clubs, Delta Kappa Gamma, Kappa Kappa Gamma, the As You Like It Club, the Cosmos Club, and the Episcopalian Church. She married William G. Ferguson in Missoula on January 2, 1920. Mr. Ferguson was first the managing editor of

the Daily Missoulian, then the secretary of the Missoula Chamber of Commerce and the Miles City Chamber of Commerce. They lived in Miles City after they married. Mr. Ferguson died in 1954. Mrs. Ferguson died in Missoula in 1975.

Content Description

The collection contains the personal and professional records produced and collected by Ferguson. Much of the collection relates to her work as Dean of Women and assistant director of the museum at the University of Montana, but there are also numerous items from her involvement with sororities, as well as a substantial collection of recipes. Many items relate to the care and legacy of her father, Morton J. Elrod.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Researchers are responsible for using in accordance with 17 U.S.C. and any other applicable statutes. Copyright not transferred to The University of Montana.

Preferred Citation

[Name of document or photograph number], Mary Elrod Ferguson Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, The University of Montana-Missoula.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection is divided into nine series:

Series I: Biographical and Personal, 2 folders, 1908-1921 and undated

Series II: Correspondence, 5 folders, 1903-1972 and undated

Series III: University of Montana, 4 folders, 1932-1975 and undated

Series IV: Research Notes, 0.5 linear ft., undated

Series V: Invitations and Dance Programs, 2 folders, 1907-1911

Series VI: Recipes, 4 folders, 1898-1913 and undated

Series VII: Clippings, 1 folder, 1909-1956 and undated

Series VIII: Sororities, 5 folders, 1909-1959

Series IX: Photographs, three items, ca. 1955 and undated

Custodial History

The materials in this collection remained in the possession of Mary Elrod Ferguson until donation to the Mansfield Library.

Acquisition Information

Purchased from Mary Elrod Ferguson by the Friends of the Library, 1966.

Processing Note

The Ferguson papers were originally a subgroup of the Morton John Elrod Collection, and Ferguson seems to have participated in their processing to some extent. In 2000, as part of reprocessing the Elrod papers, the Ferguson papers were made a separate collection, rearranged minimally, and re-described.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Biographical and Personal , 1908-1921 and undated

2 folders

This series contains a variety of biographical information compiled by Ferguson on an unknown date, and two diaries from 1908 and 1920-1921.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Biographical	undated
1/2	Diaries	1908 and 1920-1921

Series II: Correspondence , 1903-1972 and undated

5 folders

This series contains a mix of personal and business correspondence, beginning with a substantial collection of letters received from Ferguson's father, Morton J. Elrod. After Elrod became disabled, the letters reflect the extent to which Ferguson became responsible for her father's affairs. There are numerous condolence letters sent after her father's death that are a valuable source of information about him. In addition, there is substantial late correspondence about the disposal of her book collection, which included many items from her father, in the late 1960s. There is also one folder of correspondence concerning Norwegian immigrant and Missoula resident Carl Sortveit, the janitor of the Episcopalian Church who willed his house to the Church, and his death. Morton Elrod's papers also contain a considerable correspondence between father and daughter that illuminates many aspects of their lives, particularly her childhood and early twenties.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/3		1903-1949
1/4		1950-1959
1/5		1960-1972
1/6		undated
1/7	Carl Sortveit	1964-1965

Series III: University of Montana , 1932-1975 and undated

4 folders

This series consists of materials relating to the Museum and Northwest History Collection at the University of Montana and to Ferguson's time as Dean of Women. Museum-related items are mostly correspondence, inventories, and related legal papers concerning the donation of collections. There is also a register of museum visitors, 1969-1975, and a notebook of notes related to museum collections, including notes on local history, Native American tribes, and Helen Clark (born Judith Basin, 1848). The Dean of Women materials contain in part routine business correspondence. But more interestingly, they also contain several papers Ferguson authored for women attending the University of Montana: "The Life of The Women Students of the State University of Montana," "Women in the University," and "Orientation of Women in the University" (a radio talk from 1932). There is also a copy of a letter sent to the women students at the University of Oregon from their Dean of Women, Hazel P. Schwering, ca. early 1940s.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/8	Assistant Director of Museum	1949-1953 and undated
1/9	Assistant Director of Museum, Research Notes	1947 and undated
1/10	Assistant Director of Museum, Museum Visitors	1969-1975
1/11	Dean of Women	1935 and undated

Series IV: Research Notes , undated

0.5 linear ft.

This series contains research notes compiled by Ferguson on a number of subjects, including Glacier National Park, Native Americans, and Missoula and Montana history. Some of this seems to have been related to her work as museum curator, but the work on Glacier National Park seems to be a continuation of some of her father's work with its focus on the origins of the names of park features.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
2/1	Glacier National Park	
2/2	Missoula History	
2/3	Missoula History	
2/4	Montana History	
2/5	Montana History	
2/6	Montana History	
2/7	Native Americans	
2/8	Native Americans	

Series V: Invitations and Dance Programs , 1907-1911

2 folders

This series contains a variety of invitations to social and official events, including dinners, University of Montana Commencement, and events in the Missoula community. There are also a variety of programs and dance cards from University of Montana events, particularly fraternity and sorority dances.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
2/9	Dance Programs and Invitations	
2/10	Dance Programs and Invitations	

Series VI: Recipes , 1898-1913 and undated

4 folders

This series contains a variety of recipes collected by Ferguson. Some are hand-written in a hardbound notebook, but the majority are small pamphlets from commercial firms that include both recipes and instructions for canning, etc.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
3/1	Recipes	
3/2	Recipes	
3/3	Recipes	
3/4	Recipes	
3/5	Recipes	
3/6	Recipes	
4/1	Recipes	

Series VII: Clippings , 1909-1956 and undated

1 folder

This series contains newspaper clippings collected by Ferguson. Most are feature and news articles about her as curator of the Museum or Dean of Women, but a number are about her father, including schools named after him, aspects of Glacier National Park, and stories about his work at the University of Montana.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
4/2		1909-1956 and undated

Series VIII: Sororities , 1909-1959

5 folders

This series contains mostly materials from the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority at the University of Montana, of which Ferguson was secretary. It includes some routine correspondence, meeting minutes, a 1927 and 1930 history of the chapter, and numerous programs and dance cards from sorority social events. The series also contains one folder of additional materials contains materials from Delta Kappa Gamma sorority and the Delta Sigma sorority. Ferguson's Penetrabilia pin from the University of Montana is also present.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
4/3	Correspondence	1920-1959
4/4	Minutes	1919-1921
4/5	Chapter History	1927-1930
4/6	Programs and Memorabilia	

Series IX: Photographs , ca. 1955 and undated

three items

This series contains three photos that were originally in Series II: Correspondence; two of Carl Sortveit home, and one is of the two Episcopalian priests who officiated at his funeral, Fathers Berrett and Boydston.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
4/7	205(IX)1: Home of Carl Sortveit, 803 Gerald Avenue, Missoula, MT	undated
4/8	205(IX)2: Home of Carl Sortveit, 803 Gerald Avenue, Missoula, MT	undated
4/9	205(IX)3: Revs. Berrett and Boydston (Holy Spirit Episcopal Church), who officiated at Sortveit funeral	ca. 1955

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

College museums--Montana --Missoula
 Greek letter societies -- Montana--Missoula
 Women college students -- Montana--Missoula

Personal Names :

Elrod, Morton J. (Morton John), b. 1863

Corporate Names :

University of Montana -- Missoula
 University of Montana -- Missoula--Alumni and alumnae
 University of Montana -- Missoula--Museums
 University of Montana -- Missoula--Students

Form or Genre Terms :

Photographs

Recipes

Occupations :

Deans of women -- Montana--Missoula

Women museum directors --Montana--Missoula

Finding aid prepared by Jodi Allison-Bunnell (2000)
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