



McPherson/Weed Family Alcatraz Papers

GOGA 35178



Golden Gate National Recreation Area
ATTN: Park Archives and Records Center
Building 201, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123
[Mailing Address]

Park Archives and Records Center
Presidio of San Francisco
Building 667 McDowell Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94129
[Physical Address]

www.nps.gov/goga/historyculture

Phone: 415-561-2807

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Susan Ewing Haley, Park Archivist

Introduction

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Park Description

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), a unit of the National Park Service, was established by an Act of Congress on October 27, 1972. The 80,000-acre park encompasses a great diversity of cultural and natural resources in and around the Bay Area of San Francisco, California. It includes Muir Woods National Monument and Fort Point National Historic Site.

The park holds almost five million three-dimensional and documentary artifacts dating from the time before European contact to the present. They are preserved and maintained for the public by the Division of Cultural Resources and Museum Management, which includes the Park Archives and Records Center (PARC).

Park Archives and Records Center (PARC)

Historical Note

GGNRA and the sites within it have been collecting records since their inception. The PARC was established in 1994 to receive records and archival collections from the U.S. Army and the Presidio Army Museum after the closure of the Presidio of San Francisco as an Army base. The collections continue to grow through the donation of materials by private individuals, transfer of inactive park records by staff, and acquisition of relevant documentary materials.

Scope of Collections

The archival collections in the custody of the GGNRA document the history and activity of the various sites and groups associated with the park, described in the park's Scope of Collection Statement (2009).

The PARC contains U.S. Army and National Park Service facility records for the Presidio of San Francisco, forts and coast defense sites in the area, and various GGNRA sites. Subjects and sites documented include the United States Army (Bear Flag Revolt, Civil War, Spanish-American War, Mexican War, World War I, Army Air Service, Coast Artillery, Army medical facilities

and issues, World War II, Army support during natural disasters, Viet Nam War, and Operation Desert Storm); Alcatraz Island (Army fortress, Army Disciplinary Barracks, U.S. Penitentiary, and Indian Occupation); the natural resources conservation movement resulting in the establishment of Muir Woods National Monument; agriculture in the Marin Headlands; Point Reyes Peninsula and Bolinas Lagoon areas; U.S. Lifesaving/Coast Guard Services; San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906; Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915; natural resources and environmental issues; and preservation of open space in the Bay Area. Also included in the PARC are many of the GGNRA administrative records that document the development and expansion of this park.

Visiting the PARC for Research

The PARC is located in an historic brick building, formerly a cavalry stable, on the Presidio of San Francisco. Collections and archives support services are available for walk-in research during open hours or by appointment. Please contact the PARC (see below) for the current schedule of reference hours.

Copy Services

Black and white photocopy services for standard and oversize materials are available on-site. Color photocopying, photographic duplication, and duplication of other media are available by special arrangement. Researchers are charged for all duplicates on a cost-recovery basis.

Rights and Publications

Copies are provided under the Fair Use provisions of the Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.). Researchers must complete a Permission to Publish Contract form with the Park Archivist for any other intended use of these materials (such as publication or exhibit). Researchers should consult with staff regarding their needs for commercial or public use of materials.

Legal Status of Holdings

Many holdings of the PARC were acquired/transferred prior to the establishment of the archives program, and have little documentation on their provenance (source/chain of custody). All materials received after 1994 have been accessioned and documented. If provenance cannot be determined, the PARC assumes that it owns the property rights, but does not own the copyright. Staff will provide assistance, but it is the responsibility of the researcher to acquire permission from the copyright holder to cite, quote, or reproduce collection materials.

Collections developed by or for government organizations or operations are in the public domain and may be used, cited, and quoted without restriction, provided they are properly credited to the PARC. The archives contain no national security classified materials.

Donations to the Collections

The PARC welcomes donations of a variety of historic materials that meet the criteria in the Scope of Collections Statement and do not duplicate existing holdings. Collections are maintained for research use in perpetuity; there is no guarantee that items will be exhibited. If you own materials that may be relevant to the themes of GGNRA and would like to deposit them in the PARC, please consult with an archivist.

How to Use This Finding Aid

This document contains information on the contents and significance of an archival collection. It includes descriptive information; repository information; collection history; biographical or historical information on creators of the collection; and a container or folder list of everything in the collection. After reviewing the finding aid, please discuss your specific needs with the archivist who will locate and retrieve the relevant materials.

How to Use the Collections

Please follow all rules and regulations regarding research, the use of the research facility, and the handling of collection materials. This will protect the collections so they continue to be available and usable for generations to come. If anything appears to be out of order or damaged, please notify a staff member.

Contacts

For additional information on the use of archival collections at GGNRA, please contact the Park Archives and Records Center:

Mailing Address:

National Park Service
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Attn: Park Archives and Records Center
Fort Mason, Bldg. 201
San Francisco, CA 94123

Physical Address:

Park Archives and Records Center
Presidio of San Francisco
Building 667 McDowell Avenue
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McPherson/Weed Family Alcatraz Papers

Title

McPherson/Weed Family Alcatraz Papers

Dates

Inclusive: 1928-1993

Bulk: 1940-1960

Collection Number

Catalog Number GOGA 35178 (Accession Number GOGA-1510)

Provenance

Montrose R. "Mac" McPherson was a corrections officer on Alcatraz from 1940 [?] to 1960. He was married to Mary C. McPherson, and was stepfather to her daughter Phyllis Tulloch McPherson, later Weed. Mary and Phyllis joined Mac on the island in 1945 [?] when Phyllis was a young teenager. While living on the island, Phyllis went to school in San Francisco, while Mary was the assistant Postmaster on the island and tested recipes for Sunset Magazine. Phyllis went to Oregon State College (now Oregon State University) in 1950, and thereafter sporadically lived on Alcatraz until she was married in 1956. Mac died on Alcatraz in July of 1960 of cancer. These papers were donated to the GGNRA by Phyllis McPherson Weed. For more information on the family's experiences on Alcatraz, see GOGA 35181, Phyllis Weed's memoir entitled, Alcatraz, Hometown.

Volume

Four [4] document boxes, one [1] small box, five [5] oversize folders and seven [7] books
4.5 LF

Description

This collection consists of personal items belonging to the McPherson family while they lived on Alcatraz, work-related papers belonging to Montrose McPherson, documents concerning the official operations of the United States Federal Penitentiary at Alcatraz,

photographs and slides of Alcatraz, published information about Alcatraz and the federal prison system, and Alcatraz Alumni Association newsletters. Personal items include ID cards, correspondence, menus, invitations, Alcatraz Women's Club cookbooks, and other daily life ephemera. Montrose McPherson's work-related papers include weekly assignments, time and leave paperwork, job descriptions and evaluations, and purchase orders and requisitions. Prison operation documents include memoranda, prisoner classification material, a Permanent Resident card, information the educational programs, descriptions of job duties, and regulations of various groups. Photograph topics include both the island and its residents from 1928 to 1956. Published information includes pamphlets on Alcatraz Island and the prison, and autographed copy of Eyewitness to Alcatraz by Joleyne Babyak, six issues of the Alcatraz Foghorn, and several books on the federal prison system. Also included is a set of prisoner-made playing cards. See detailed item list.

Preferred Citation

“Golden Gate NRA, Park Archives, McPherson/Weed Family Alcatraz Papers, GOGA 35178”

Index

Alcatraz Island (Calif.)
Alcatraz Island (Calif.) --Buildings
Alcatraz Island (Calif.)--History
McPherson, Mary C.
McPherson, Montrose R
United States. Bureau of Prisons
United States Penitentiary, Alcatraz Island, California
Weed, Phyllis T. McPherson

Formats

Correspondence
Ephemera
Invitations
Maps
Newspapers
Pamphlets
Photographs

Processing Information

Processed by Kirsten Kvam
 Completed in September 2003
 Re-cataloged by Terryn Liljedahl
 Completed in July 2013

Box and Folder List

Collection Title: McPherson/Weed Family Alcatraz Papers
Collection Number: GOGA 35178

| Box # | Folder # | Description |
|-------|----------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Montrose McPherson ID Cards and Photographs from wallet |
| | 2 | Montrose McPherson Personnel Papers – Job Description, Ratings, etc., 1949-1951 |
| | 3 | Montrose McPherson Weekly Work Assignments, 1940-1955 |
| | 4 | Montrose McPherson Time & Leave Slips, 1944-1955 |
| | 5 | McPherson Personal Papers – ID Cards, Ephemera, Correspondence, 1940s-1950s |
| | 6 | Mary McPherson - Recipes |
| | 7 | Alcatraz Women’s Club Cookbooks, 1952 [2 copies] |
| | 8 | Alcatraz Women’s Club Cookbooks, 1958 [2 copies] |
| | 9 | Alcatraz Meal Tickets |
| | 10 | Alcatraz Programs, Menus 1947-1948 |
| | 11 | Alcatraz Purchase Orders and Requisitions, 1946-1951 |
| | 12 | Alcatraz Prison Operation Documents, 1946-1955 |
| | 13 | Alcatraz Memoranda, 1948-1951 |
| | 14 | Prisoner Classification Material, 1948-1952 |
| | 15 | Prescription Envelope with prisoner-made playing cards, no date |
| | 16 | Newspaper Clippings, 1970s |
| 2 | 1 | “Handbook of the Thompson Machine Gun,” 1936 |
| | 2 | “United States Penitentiary Alcatraz Island” booklets, c. 1951-1958 |
| | 3 | Alcatraz booklets and pamphlets, 1937, 1974, 1976 |
| | 4 | Advertisement for <u>Alcatraz</u> ’46 and blank release forms |
| | 5 | “San Francisco: Harbor for Ships and Men,” 1944 |
| | 6 | “Gearing Federal Prisons to the War Effort,” 1942 |
| | 7 | “The Naval Disciplinary Barracks, San Pedro, California,” 1947 |
| | 8 | “California State Prison at Soledad,” 1951 |

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|------------------------|-----|--|
| 3 | 1 | “The Fog Horn” 6 issues from Dec. 1959 to Dec. 1963 |
| | 2 | “Eyewitness on Alcatraz”, 1988, Autographed by Author Jolene Babyak |
| | 3-8 | Photographs 1928-1956 |
| | 9 | Slides, 1928-1956 |
| 4 | 1 | “Directory of Retirees – Federal Prison Service” 1965 & 1966 |
| | 2 | “Directory of Retirees – Federal Prison Service” 1970 & 1971 |
| | 3 | “Federal Prison Service Newsletter” Issue for Retirees, 1961, 1963, 1964 |
| | 4 | Alcatraz Alumni Association, 1971-1979 |
| | 5 | Alcatraz Alumni Association, 1980-1984 |
| | 6 | Alcatraz Alumni Association, 1985-1989 |
| | 7 | Alcatraz Alumni Association, 1990-1993 |
| 5 | | 1950 prisoners list <u>*needs conservation*</u> |
| S.C. Range 11x15 | 1/1 | Two color lithographs of a ship and the Golden Gate Bridge from Alcatraz, 1947 |
| S.C. Range 11x17 | 1 | Two award certificates for Montrose McPherson, 1958 |
| | 2 | <u>Collier’s</u> magazine issued August 6, 1954, “ <u>First Pictures Children on Alcatraz</u> ” |
| S.C. Range 20x24 | 1 | Stencil: “M.R. McPherson/Alcatraz Cal.” |
| | 2 | Two Maps of Alcatraz, 1928 |
| Rare Book Cab | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Prison Life is Different</u>, James A. Johnston 1937 • <u>New Horizons in Criminology: The American Crime Problem</u>, Harry Elmer Barnes & N.K. Teeters, 1945 • <u>Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing</u>, Lewis E. Lawes, 1932 • <u>Alcatraz Island Prison</u>, James A. Johnston, 1949 • <u>The Story of Punishment</u>, Harry Elmer Barnes, 1930 • <u>The San Quentin Story</u>, Clinton T. Duffy, 1950 • <u>Men at Their Worst</u>, Leo L. Stanley, 1943 |