

INVENTORY

ALICE POLK HILL COLLECTION

307

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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INVENTORY: ALICE POLK HILL COLLECTION

INTRODUCTION:

Alice Polk Hill, promoter of fine arts, representative of the club woman, and philanthropist, was born on March 22, 1845 in Shelby County, Kentucky. Her youth was spent in Shelbyville, Kentucky where she attended the Science Hill Female Academy.

After her marriage to William C. Hill, a St. Louis merchant, Alice relocated to Denver. Her husband operated a 'dry goods store while she devoted herself to the fine arts, teaching music, writing and corresponding for Denver newspapers, writing poems, plays and histories, and, at times, painting.

Alice's love of literary works culminated in her active involvement in Colorado's woman's club movement. She organized one of Denver's first woman's club, a Shakespeare study club. In 1881 Alice founded a Chautauqua Circle which evolved into a literary group devoted to the study of history, both ancient and modern. The group was called the Round Table. It was recognized by the National Federation of Women's Clubs as one of the foremost clubs of its kind. Alice served as president of the Round Table for twenty-five years. She was also instrumental in the founding of the Denver Woman's Club and the Denver Woman's Press Club.

Another woman's group to capture Alice's interest was the Woman's Moffat Tunnel Commission. Once again she was a leading member, serving for a time as the chairman. Along with her co-workers she urged support of the Moffat Tunnel project and by so doing helped to assure its completion.

In addition to the above-mentioned clubs Alice was a member of the Colorado State Historical Society, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the Confederacy, the League of American Pen Workers, and an honorary member of the Poetry Society of Colorado.

At the Charter Convention of the City and County of Denver Alice had the distinction of being the only female delegate. She represented not only the club woman, but as an investor in Denver real estate, the business interests as well. Her efforts resulted in a clause excluding women from

INVENTORY: ALICE POLK HILL COLLECTION (CONT.)

saloons, a clause providing for a municipal art commission, and another clause providing for two women on the municipal library commission.

Alice Polk Hill died in her seventy-sixth year on August 31, 1921. At the time of her death she was Colorado's first poet laureate, an honor that had been bestowed upon her in 1919 by Governor Shoup. In her lifetime Alice Polk Hill had truly been a devotee of the arts distinguishing herself as a publicist, poetess, and leader of the woman's club movement.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The collection contains correspondence (1905-1947 and no date), Alice Polk Hill's original writings, genealogical data, a certificate (1903), bound volumes of the Second Charter Convention of the City and County of Denver (1904), newspaper clippings, a photograph of the Daniel Polk home, Denver (1900), and a scrapbook of newspaper clippings pertaining to leading club women.

The collection contains valuable information on Alice Polk Hill, her interests and her contributions, as well as on other women of the time who helped to bring the woman's club movement to its fruition.

PROVENANCE:

The collection was donated to the Colorado Historical Society in 1979 by Mrs. C.T. Nuxoll

INVENTORY: ALICE POLK HILL COLLECTION (CONT.)

- FF 1: Correspondence, 12/21/1905-1/16/1947 and no date (Mainly deals with genealogy of Alice Polk Hill's family.)
- FF 2: Original writings of Alice Polk Hill (poems and music and lyrics)
- FF 3: Manuscript: "Know Thyself," Alice Polk Hill, no date
- FF 4: Genealogical data
- FF 5: Certificate: Member of the Charter Convention for the City and County of Denver, Alice Polk Hill, 12/14/1903
- FF 6: Bound volumes (2): Second Charter Convention of the City and County of Denver, 2/6/1904
- FF 7: Directory: Alumnae and Faculty of the Wolcott School (Additions and Corrections for 1956) 1962
- FF 8: Newspaper clippings 1921
- FF 9: Photograph: Daniel Polk home, Denver, 1900
- OVERSIZED: Scrapbook of newspaper clippings pertaining to leading club women 1896-1916 6 vols 1908-16