

Finding Aid for the EDITH FORSYTHE SHARPLESS PAPERS, 1910-1952

Collection No. 950

2 folders

Special Collections

Haverford College Library

November 2002 & March 2009

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Gift of Marianne Sharpless Potts, September 2002 and Charles Perry, January 1991.

Accession # 6743 and 5438

RESTRICTIONS:

No restrictions.

RELATED INFORMATION:

See also Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Japan Committee records, especially A2/F3.8.20 (Box 21) and E7.11.

Abstract:

Edith Sharpless' letters from the perspective of a Quaker missionary in Japan, birthday album for Lydia Sharpless, certificates, two photographs and artbook.

Biographical Note:

Edith F. Sharpless (1883-1956) was a Quaker religious and educational missionary to Japan from 1910-1943, sent by the Mission Board of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to work in Tokyo and Mito. She was the daughter of Isaac and Lydia Cope Sharpless, sister and sister-in-law of Fred and Louise Sharpless.

Information from Dictionary of Quaker Biography and internal evidence.

Subject Headings:

Arishima, Takeo, 1878-1923

Ayusawa, Iwao Frederick, 1894-

Binford, Gurney, 1865-1951
Bowles, Gilbert, 1869-1960
Bowles, Minnie, 1868-1958
Hartshorne, Anna C (Anna Cope), 1860-1957
Hirakawa, Seiju, b. 1874
Nitobe, Inazo, 1862-1933
Rhoads, Esther Biddle, 1896-1979
Rich, Edward Percy
Sharpless, Edith Forsythe, 1883-1956
Sharpless, Frederick Cope, 1880-1971
Sharpless, Louise Sangree, 1886-
Sharpless, Lydia Trimble Cope, 1857-1952
Simkin, Robert, 1897-1958
Walcott, Mary Vaux, 1860-1940

Society of Friends – Missions -- Japan

Collection Description:

Edith Sharpless' letters to Lydia Cope Sharpless, Fred and Louise Sharpless and John and Edward Rich, begin with her shipboard letter en route to Japan, description of the way in which foreigners, including missionaries, were living, Japanese customs and culture and Sharpless' efforts to apply the knowledge to her behavior.

The birthday album, primarily written by Edith to her mother, Lydia Sharpless, 1936, also includes greetings from a number of people, including Gurney Binford, Inazo Nitobe, Esther Rhoads, Gilbert and Minnie Pickett Bowles and Arishima Takeo (transcribed from Japanese about Haverford College and Isaac Sharpless) and a water color drawing by Anna Cope Hartshorne, a signed print by Mary Vaux Walcott, and a number of photographs of other Quaker missionaries.

The artbook is the work of 4th year students at Keisen Girls' School depicting their week.

A chronology of Edith Sharpless' life accompanies the finding aid.

Highlights of Sharpless' letters include:

referring to Haverford College missionary in China, Robert Simkin (2-4-1911)

teaching duties;

impact of a flood (7-27-1941);

making decisions about whether to stay in Japan with the help of Ayusawa, Hirakawa and others (8-4-1941);

references to the Bowles';

impact of the war on community of foreigners and living in Japan when most foreigners have left.

Also, one photograph of Edith Sharpless with friends, another with a child in front of her home and two certificates: contract and teacher's.