

Guide to the Rosetta Shear Clarkson Papers, 1904-1956

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Collection Summary

Repository:	Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries
Creator:	Clarkson, Rosetta Shear, 1892-1950
Title:	Rosetta Shear Clarkson Papers
Dates:	1904-1956
Quantity:	3.6 cubic feet (4 boxes)
Abstract:	Photographs, clippings, manuscripts, correspondence, and scrapbooks relating to Clarkson's study and cultivation of herbs.

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Biographical Note

Rosetta Elizabeth Shear was born in 1892 in Orwell, NY and was graduated from Vassar in 1914. Like many college women of that time, she became a high school teacher. In the early 1920's she took a leave from teaching to get her master's degree at Columbia. While researching her study of Henry Porter, an Elizabethan dramatist, she became fascinated with old herbals and began to study and cultivate herbs. In 1938 she and her husband, Ralph C. Clarkson, moved to Milford, Connecticut, where she devoted herself exclusively to herbs. Her work at their home, Salt Acres, was instrumental in reviving herb culture in the United States. She grew more than three hundred herbs, lectured widely, showed her gardens to hundreds of visitors annually, and supplied seeds to commercial growers and private individuals at no charge. From 1936 - 1939 she published THE HERB JOURNAL, which was sent free to more than two thousand people each month. She

wrote several books on herb cultivation and use, and founded the Herb Lovers Book Club to publish reprint editions of old herbals and gardening books which she and her husband collected. After years of poor health she died in 1950.

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Scope and Content Note

Collection primarily concerns her interest and professional activities as an herb enthusiast and includes her diaries and engagement books, 1904-1947; a travel diary, circa 1932; letters from Remsen B. Ostrander, 1918; correspondence concerning her publications and her book collecting activities, 1937-1956; manuscripts and galley proofs from her books Green Enchantment, Herbs: Their Culture and Use, and Magic Fragrance, and other notes and manuscripts; and copyright correspondence and various issues of *The Herb Journal*, 1936-1938. Other items include her Master's thesis on Henry Porter with related correspondence, 1924; accounts, 1937-1939; and miscellaneous biographical information and photographs.

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Subject Headings

Names:

- Ostrander, Remsen B.
- Porter, Henry

Subjects:

- Book collecting
- Cookery (Herbs)
- Herb gardening
- Herbs
- Women authors, American
- Women travelers
- Women--Diaries

Document Types:

- Diaries
- Photographs

VCL Categories

- Literature and Writing
- Nature and Natural History
- Travel

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Encoding Information

Encoded by Elizabeth Clarke, December 2006.

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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Rosetta Shear Clarkson Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Original processing date unknown

Acquisition Information

Gift of Eleanor P. Clarkson.

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Container List

Folders 1.1-1.4	Biographical information: personal documents, honors, Kingston Academy, 1908-1910
Folder 1.5	Pictures
Folder 1.6	Collection of pressed plants
Folder 1.7	Accounts, 1937-1939
Folder 1.8	Letters from Remsen B. Ostrander, 1918
Folder 1.9	Correspondence relating to selection, 1937
Folder 1.10	Book-collecting correspondence, 1937-1938
Folder 1.11	Correspondence relating to publications, 1937-1948
Folder 1.12	Correspondence with the Macmillan Company, 1939-1956
Folder 1.13	Herb Lovers Book Club
Box 1	22 diaries and engagement books, 1904-1947
Box 1	Travel diary, 1932
Folders 2.1-2.2	Magazine articles, brochures, and charts by R.S.C.
Folder 2.3	Printing, binding, and publicity

Folder 2.4	Manuscript of Green Enchantment (NY: Macmillan), 1940
Folders 2.5-2.9	Manuscript, typescript, galley proof and page proofs, Herbs; Their Culture and Uses (NY: Macmillan), 1942
Folders 2.10-2.11	The Herb Journal and copyright correspondence, file of this publication edited by R.S.C. 1936-1938
Box 2	2 notebooks of information on individual herbs
Folders 3.1-3.2	Manuscript and typed copy of Magic Fragrance (Limited edition), consisting of first 12 issues of The Herb Journal, 1937
Folders 3.3-3.4	Master thesis, New Facts about Henry Porter and His Work (Columbia University), Issue of PMLA Related correspondence, 1942
Folders 3.5-3.9	Miscellaneous manuscripts and notes relating to herbs, Sept 1927
Box 4	Two scrapbooks relating to activities and publications

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▼ Details

Abstract

Photographs, clippings, manuscripts, correspondence, and scrapbooks relating to Clarkson's study and cultivation of herbs.

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