

Sarah Coleman Bragdon Collection

DATES: 1880-1960

EXTENT: Three boxes

Biographical Note:

The following is taken from the book entitled, "Coleman, Musicmaker," by Robert Winter, printed in Pasadena, California, 2000.

Sarah Coleman was the daughter of Theodore and Jennie Coleman, who just after the Civil War moved to Beatrice, Nebraska, where Theodore founded and published a newspaper, *The Beatrice Express*. Their children, Frank (1871) and Alice (1872) were born in Nebraska, and son Charles (1877) was born in Alexandria, Virginia while Theodore was serving in Washington, D.C. as secretary to the Senator from Nebraska.

Frank suffered from asthma, and seeking a more congenial climate the Coleman family moved again to Santa Clara, California, where another daughter, Sarah, was born on February 1, 1880. The family settled in Pasadena in 1886, the year the city was incorporated. Theodore's editing experience led to a position with the *Pasadena Weekly Star*, and Jennie taught history and English literature at Throop Polytechnic Institute. Not much is known about the childhood of Alice and Sarah, except that both were drawn to music.

Both grew up to become accomplished pianists and music teachers, Sarah being especially interested in composition, and Alice excelling as a technician. As her nephew Alan Batchelder remembered her, Sarah was easy going and full of fun, (Alice was more serious about the pursuit of music. She took organ lessons from the Presbyterian Church organist, and when he returned to London, England, she inherited his job. At the same time, she was assistant to the organist at the Episcopal Church of the Angels, and she succeeded him when he died. She was also taking piano lessons from local teachers, and at 18 decided to go to Boston for further training.)

Mary Olive O’Daniels, a Pasadena resident, had taken lessons from Sarah, then Alice. She remembered Alice as “a more thorough taskmaster than Sarah”. Another advanced student recalled Alice would allow him to play the solo part of a piano concerto while she accompanied him with a piano arrangement, often by Sarah, or the orchestral score.

Sarah Coleman Bragdon died January 11, 1960, and is buried in Mountain View Cemetery, Pasadena. John R. Bragdon (1875-1940), her husband, is buried in the same plot.

Scope and Content:

The Sarah Coleman Bragdon Collection consists of three boxes of music she composed as well as published pieces of hers. A more detailed list of the boxes can be found under “SCB detailed box list PDF.”

Box 1: Manuscript Music for Piano by Sarah Coleman Bragdon,
SCB 1-1 to SCB 1-52.

Manuscript Music for Piano Trios and Quartets by Sarah Coleman Bragdon

SCB 1-53 to SCB 1-65

Box 2: Manuscript Music for Voices by Sarah Coleman Bragdon
SCB 2-1 to SCB 2-22

Published Music by Sarah Coleman Bragdon

SCB 2-23 to SCB 2-43

Box 3: Music Written about Pasadena from the Sarah Coleman Bragdon Collection

SCB 3-1 to SCB 3-22

SCB 3-23 to SCB 3-74

