

Guide to the Papers of Emma Lewis Coleman

Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library

Scope and Content Note:

Born in Boston in 1853, Emma Lewis Coleman was an author, photographer, teacher, and craftswoman who spent part of her life in Deerfield, Mass. As the daughter of Lewis Coleman (a well-to-do merchant) and Elizabeth Farrington Coleman, Emma Coleman travelled somewhat extensively in Europe in her youth and received part of her education in Paris. In the 1870s, Coleman taught at a school in Brookline, Mass., where her friendship with Charlotte Alice Baker (1833-1909) and Susan Minot Lane (1832-1893) took root. Baker, a teacher and historian, and Lane, a teacher and painter, had met previously at Deerfield Academy. The three women travelled to the Azores and Maderia in 1879; Coleman's diary from that trip is part of her papers. Coleman, Baker, and Lane began dividing their time between three locations: Cambridge, Mass., Cutts Island, Kittery, Maine, and Deerfield where Baker had purchased the Frary House, her ancestral home. Coleman became very involved in the restoration of the house (1890-1892) and began to share Baker's antiquarian interests.

Coleman accompanied C. Alice Baker on trips to Quebec to research Baker's *True Stories of New England Captives Carried to Canada* (Cambridge, 1897), illustrated by Coleman's photographs. She also illustrated Sarah Orne Jewett's *Deephaven* (Boston, 1877) and George Dow's *Everyday Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Boston, 1935) among other works. Coleman's first book, *Historic and Present Day Guide to Old Deerfield*, published in 1907 with several later editions, also featured her own photographs. In Deerfield Coleman continued the work begun by C. Alice Baker, and in 1924 published *Epitaphs in the Old Burying-ground at Deerfield, Mass.* Her most ambitious and significant work, *New England Captives Carried to Canada* (Portland, ME, 1925), also expanded C. Alice Baker's research. As part of the local arts and crafts movement, Coleman reintroduced palm leaf basketry in 1899 and was instrumental in establishing the Deerfield Basket Makers. Emma Lewis Coleman died in Boston in Feb. 1942.

Coleman's papers include two binders of exceptional material. One documents the history of the Frary House where she resided periodically with C. Alice Baker and Susan M. Lane. Coleman's typescript, with original photos and printed items pasted in, covers early owners, the adjacent Barnard Tavern, and modern events that occurred there. The other binder is an expansive biography of C. Alice Baker, interleaved with original letters and photographs and printed documents. Also present are a number of typescripts and manuscript writings, one of the latter being text that appeared in a later edition of *Historic and Present Day Guide to Old Deerfield*. A heavily edited typescript titled "Captive Children 1677-1724" relates to her two-volume published work, *New England Captives Carried to Canada*, but the relationship is unclear. It and other items entered the collection over a long period of time. Gifts of materials include those of Mrs. Agnes Sheldon, Philip Hall Jr.,

Miss Coleman's nephew, the estate of Henry Barber, and the Tilton Library, South Deerfield. For additional correspondence, see George Sheldon's papers, Box 8, fol. 1, for letters from Coleman. Additional Coleman papers are part of the records of the Village Room/Martha Goulding Pratt Memorial, for which she served as secretary and helped organize.

Container List:

Box 1

Folder 1: Biographical information, inc. an essay by Arthur N. Fuller and photocopies relating to her father, Lewis Coleman. (5 items)

Folder 2: "Captive Children, 1677-1724." Typescript (168 number pages), showing numerous edits with handwritten notes at end. (1 item)

Folder 3: Correspondence, 1916-1941 and undated. (23 items)

Folder 4: Photography. Copy prints and photocopies of Coleman photographs; photocopy of labels for the exhibition, "Emma Lewis Coleman: Photographer in the Barbizon Mood, 1880s-1890s," held in 1979 at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston. (5 items)

Folder 5: Writings. Manuscripts: diary kept in the Azores, 1879; "Memories of a Perfect Day" (poem); "History Deerfield" (text that appeared in *An Historic and Present Day Guide to Deerfield*); "A Postscript of Happenings" (relates to "Concerning Frary House"); assorted notes. Small volume of notes on basket patterns and prices, n.d., Typescripts: "Our Village Room"; "A Postscript of Happenings" Printed: *Two Indian Chiefs*. (15 items)

Box 2

Untitled biographical study of Charlotte Alice Baker (1833-1909) compiled by Coleman in 1933. Typescript (107 numbered pages, and additional pages) with mounted original photographs, printed matter, manuscript letters, and newspaper clippings. (1 binder)

"Concerning Frary House." Typescript (88 pages, and additional pages) with mounted original photographs, printed matter, manuscripts, and newspaper clippings. (1 binder)

"Concerning Frary House." Typescript (69 pp.) (1 binder)