Everett and Grace Rodebaugh papers


Last updated on February 27, 2014.
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### Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Welkinweir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creator</strong></td>
<td>Rodebaugh, Everett George, 1902-1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Everett and Grace Rodebaugh papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call number</strong></td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>circa 1890-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extent</strong></td>
<td>24.5 linear feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>Everett G. Rodebaugh (1902-1983), a nationally prominent court reporter and founder of a court-reporting service in Philadelphia, Pa. married Grace M. Haspel (1905-1999) in 1925. A wealthy couple who never had children, the Rodebaughs were socialites, travelled extensively, and were active as philanthropists and conservationists. In 1935, they purchased &quot;Welkinweir,&quot; a 162-acre farm estate in East Nantmeal Township, Chester County, Pa., and converted part of the grounds into an arboretum. Welkinweir, placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, as of 2013 is owned and administered by Green Valleys Association (an organization the Rodebaughs helped found in 1964). The Everett and Grace Rodebaugh papers, circa 1890-1985, consist of Everett Rodebaugh's professional papers, which include correspondence and legal/court records and transcripts; the personal papers of Everett and Grace, which largely include photographs, travel slides, and letters between the two; and materials relating to the Welkinweir estate such as photographs, correspondence, financial and legal documents, and blueprints.</td>
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Biography/History

Everett George Rodebaugh (1901-1983), a 1922 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, founded a court-reporting service in Philadelphia and was a nationally prominent court reporter. He was president of Court Reporters Inc. and Shorthand Service Inc., and for 54 years directed staff in recording trial testimony, governmental hearings, contract negotiations and arbitration sessions, shareholder meetings for companies such as General Motors, the Sun Co., Du Pont Co., UGI and Arco, and meetings of private organizations such as the Pennsylvania Bar Association throughout the Philadelphia area.

Everett earned enough money to support the couple comfortably, and allowed him time to pursue his interests which included environmental matters, historical restoration and preservation, collecting books and antiques, music, horticulture, conservation, travel and photography. He was the founder and first president of the Green Valleys Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania; chairman of the Chester County Water Resources Authority; president of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association; founder of the Countrymen's Club; member of the Quaker City Farmers' Club; and was active in the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture and the Men's Garden Club of the Delaware Valley. He served as chairman of the Conference of United States Court Reporters and president of the National Shorthand Reporters Association.

In 1925, Everett married his high school sweetheart, Grace M. Haspel (1905-1999), the daughter of Merrick B. and Marie S. Haspel. A decade later, the couple purchased a declining 162-acre farm estate in East Nantmeal Township, Chester County, Pa. They named it "Welkinweir" and began transforming both the landscape and the house. They converted part of the grounds into formal gardens and an arboretum, with the remainder serving as a nature preserve, and added a large Colonial Revival addition to the house designed by architect Fridtjof Tobiessen. The couple also purchased for the home a rare 1928 Skinner pipe organ.

The Rodebaugh’s estate became a major social center over the years. The couple, who never had children, also travelled extensively and were active as philanthropists and conservationists. Everett traveled around the world 15 times and wrote articles about his journeys. His articles appeared in Saturday Evening Post, the American Bar Association Journal, the Pennsylvania Bar Association Quarterly, the Practical Lawyer, and Case & Comment."

In 1964 the Rodebaughs helped establish the Green Valleys Association, an environmental organization whose mission is to protect and preserve the watersheds of northern Chester County. They were also the main benefactors of the Penn Rodebaugh Diabetes Center at the University of Pennsylvania, which opened in 1980 and is named in their honor.

In 1980, the Rodebaughs and Welkinweir gained notoriety as the couple was the victim of a home invasion led by one of their house guests. A collection of silver valued at $250,000 was stolen.

Green Valleys Association took title to Welkinweir in 1997 and now administers the property, which serves as its headquarters and educational center. Welkinweir was placed into conservation easement in
1976 and onto the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. As of 2013, Welkinweir is open to the public year round on a daily basis and receives several thousand visitors annually.

Bibliography:


Scope and Contents

This collection consists of Everett G. Rodebaugh's professional papers; the personal papers of Everett and his wife, Grace H. Rodebaugh; and materials relating to the couple's Welkinweir estate.

Everett's professional papers include mostly correspondence, legal and court-related records and transcripts, and some financial records.

Everett and Grace Rodebaugh's personal papers include a large number of photographs, correspondence, financial papers, and other materials. There are a large number of slides documenting Everett's travels alone and with Grace, as well as family photographs and photographs of social events that the couple hosted. The correspondence includes a large number of letters between Everett and Grace, dating from 1923 to 1975. There are also financial papers; insurance forms, letters, and other documents regarding imports of foreign decorative objects; and letters and legal documents relating to the 1980 robbery; files with correspondence, clippings, and ephemera on subjects of personal interest to Everett; a few newspaper clippings, primarily obituaries of Everett's parents; ephemera, some of which relates to the University of Pennsylvania; and personal documents, including Everett's birth certificate (1902).

Materials that relate to Welkinweir include: photographs taken by the Rodebaughs of their property, 1950s-1960s; blueprints, sketches, and plans, 1935-1940s, by Edward H. Wigham (designs never materialized) and Fridjof Tobiessen (designs implemented); correspondence, estimates, and receipts with construction suppliers, circa 1940-1950; reports regarding the conservation and preservation of buildings and landscapes; and papers relating to the purchase of the Skinner organ and its transport from New York City to Welkinweir, which was overseen by Ernest Skinner, 1940-1945. There are also papers relating to the arboretum at Welkinweir, including letters and receipts from nurseries, handwritten notes about plans, information and mailings from other arboreta, and materials relating to hiring of gardeners, circa 1945-1980.
Administrative Information

Welkinweir

Sponsor
This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions
Contact Welkinweir for information about accessing this collection.

Processing Information Note
Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact Welkinweir directly for more information.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials Note
Controlled Access Headings

Family Name(s)

• Rodebaugh family

Geographic Name(s)

• Chester County (Pa.)
• Welkinweir (Pa.)

Personal Name(s)

• Rodebaugh, Everett G., 1902-1983
• Rodebaugh, Grace H., 1905-1999
• Tobiessen, Fridtjof
• Wigham, Edward H.

Subject(s)

• Arboretums
• Conservationists
• Historic buildings
• Historic house museums
• Law reporters
• Travel