



# Guide to the Idah Pratt Scrapbook 1912-1967

Archives and Special Collections  
Library and Research Center  
National Museum of Women in the Arts

Re-processed by Patrick Brown  
August 2006  
2 linear feet; 1 container

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## Biography

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Idah Sidonia Ambuhl Pratt Foster was born in Farina, IL in 1884. Early on, as a young woman, Pratt lived in New Orleans and Dallas. Very little is known of her early life until she moved to San Francisco at age 24, with two small sons and her first husband Charles F. Pratt Sr.

After she divorced Charles, Pratt began to publish and edit a small paper in Redondo Beach, CA, called the *Redondo Breeze* around 1915. She also wrote for the *San Francisco Times* on occasion. After an article appears in a local paper, the *Examiner* featured a photo of her working at her printing press and mentioned her ownership of the newspaper; she became a local celebrity, receiving 30 marriage proposals. Also in 1915, Pratt was in charge of the model kitchen and laundry exhibition installed in the Home Economy Building at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego.

Idah Pratt was always involved in women's rights. She became active in the referendum drive to win the vote for women in California and the referendum was finally passed in 1916, the year she met and married Carol Howe Foster who was an English instructor at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. They were married in Alexandria, VA after she had come to DC to take a course at the National Service School for Women through the Red Cross.

Eventually, her husband became consul in Vienna, Austria in 1919. He also served as U.S. Consul General in Brazil and South Africa. In the mid-1940s, always the activist, Pratt worked for passage of legislation benefiting consular officers' widows for whom, at that point, there were no annuity arrangements. Her husband died in 1957, but she still remained active in her community.

At 81, she became a member of the National Women's party and was elected to the National Council in 1965. She eventually became the National Finance Chairman. Idah Pratt died at age 83 in 1967 in Maryland.

## Chronology

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- 1884** Idah Sidonia Ambuhl Pratt Foster was born in Farina, IL .
- c. 1908** Moves to San Francisco with two small sons and her first husband, Charles F. Pratt Sr.
- c. 1915** Pratt begins to publish and edit a small paper called the *Redondo Breeze*.
- 1915** Pratt in charge of the model kitchen and laundry exhibition installed in the Home Economy Building at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego.
- 1916** Active in women's rights, referendum to win the vote for women in California was passed.

Went to DC to take a course at the National Service School for Women through the Red Cross.

Met and Married Carol Howe Foster; he was an English Instructor at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD.

- Mid-1940s** Pratt worked for passage of legislation benefiting consular officers' widows for whom, at that point, there were no annuity arrangements.
- 1957** Carol Howe Foster dies.
- 1965** Pratt became a member of the National Women's party and was elected to the National Council.
- 1967** Pratt dies in Maryland at age of 83.

## Scope and Content

This collection is composed of the contents of one scrapbook. Constructed by Idah Sidonia Pratt Foster out of a folder sample book, the scrapbook contains a wide variety of material. There are photographs from the Panama-California Exposition in 1915, showing buildings and people, as well as articles mentioning Pratt's involvement with the expo. Correspondence and articles are also included in the scrapbook. The scrapbook spans the dates 1912-1916. Also in the collection is a copy of Pratt's obituary laminated on a prayer card and copies of her newspaper, *Redondo Breeze*.

The collection is divided into four series:

- Series 1: Scrapbook, c.1912- c. 1916
- Series 2: *Redondo Breeze*, 1915
- Series 3: Loose Clippings, 1915-1916
- Series 4: Obituary on Prayer Card, 1967

## Provenance

Unknown.

## Series Descriptions

### Series I: Scrapbook, c.1912-c.1916

This series consists of the scrapbook which contains photographs of buildings and people, an article mentioning Pratt's involvement with the expo, correspondence, and articles.

### Series II: *Redondo Breeze*, 1915

This series contains copies of Pratt's newspaper, *Redondo Breeze*, from 1915, in chronological order.

### Series III: Loose Clippings, 1915-1916

This series includes loose clippings in mylar sleeves, arranged chronologically.

### Series IV: Obituary on Prayer Card, 1967

This series is a prayer card with Idah Pratt's obituary laminated on the back.

## Processing

The collection is contained in one box, located in the Library and Research Center. In 2003 a finding aid was written. Loose material was placed in mylar sleeves and a majority of the scrapbook has been interleaved. Reprocessed in 2006, the collection was separated into four series (Scrapbook, *Redondo Breeze*, Loose Clippings, and Obituary on Prayer Card.) and re-housed in acid-free folders as well as a larger box to minimize damage while handling. The finding aid was formatted to DACS standard.

## Related Materials

No Entry.

## Box Inventory

### **SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE, 1900-1959**

#### **Box 1**

Scrapbook.

### **SERIES II: *REDONDO BREEZE*, 1915**

#### **Folder 1**

July 31, 1915 edition.  
August 14, 1915 edition.  
September 4, 1915 edition.

### **SERIES III: LOOSE CLIPPINGS, 1915-1916**

#### **Folder 2**

"Modern Laundry Sanitary Kitchen Planned for 1915."  
"A Busy Newspaper Girl," *El Paso, Texas, Herald*: August 6, 1915.  
"30 Propose to Beach Girl All Due to Examiner Story."  
"Annapolis Instructor and His Recent Bride," *Washington Post*: Sunday, July 23, 1916.  
"A Chronicle of Society," *The Washington Times*: Sunday, July 23, 1916.  
"Pretty Bride to Remain Here Until She Goes to Annapolis in Autumn," *The Washington Post*: Monday, July 31, 1916.  
Two sheets of Welles, Pratt & Co. stationary with Idah S. Pratt listed as Sec'y-Treas.

### **SERIES IV: OBITUARY ON PRAYER CARD, 1967**

#### **Folder 3**

Prayer card with Obituary laminated on the back.