

Kingston Public Library: Local History Room
Manuscript Collection Finding Aid
December 6, 2000

Helen Holmes (1865-1938)
Helen Holmes Papers

Manuscript Collection, MC-1

1 Box (3 linear inches)

Biographical Sketch: Helen Holmes was born in Kingston, Massachusetts, on September 9th, 1865. After graduating from Kingston high school at the age of 15 in 1881 she went on to graduated from Smith College in 1887, and subsequently pursued graduate studies at Radcliff College and the Massachusetts Agricultural College (now University of Massachusetts at Amherst), where she was one of the first women to attend classes.

She resided at the Hillholm Farm in Kingston. She enjoyed traveling, art, music, gardening and civic affairs, and had an affinity for linguistics, which enabled her to become fluent in French, Italian, and German as well as English. She served as the superintendent of schools for the town of Kingston, and for about three years she was the hostess of the Maison Internationale in Geneva, Switzerland.

Helen Holmes was an active participant in many different facets of public life including Old Home Days, garden clubs, community markets, social work at Plymouth Cordage, and the Plymouth Girls Club. She was the first president of the Jones River Village Club and served as a president of the New England Farm and Garden Association. A contemporary referred to her as being a “charming speaker.”

Scope and Content Note: Nearly all of the collection is concerned with Helen Holmes’ interest in gardening. Perhaps most notable are lecture notes and manuscript materials on the topics of herbs, roses, old New England gardens, and gardens in Geneva. Also included are clippings, fliers, and pamphlets on various aspects of horticulture, together with some herb vendor price lists.

Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	Item
1	1	Booklet: Family chronicles, 1910
	2	Tributes to Helen Holmes, written by Emily Fuller Drew and others
	3	Correspondence
	4	Historic Houses and gardens
	5	Gardens in Geneva
	6	Old Houses and cuttings
	7	Old Gardens – newspaper clippings
	8	Roses, general information
	9	Roses, newspaper clippings
	10	Lecture notes
	11	Miscellaneous: plant orders, book lists, English countryside material
	12	Horticulture, newspaper clippings

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Box and Folder List continued...

13	Herbs, general information
14	Herbs, cuttings and pamphlets

Acquisition: Gardening material donated by the Arnold Arboretum in 1999 (folders 5 – 14.) Remaining Collection donated retrospectively.

Access: Unrestricted

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Processor: Archivist Andrew Pollock, III originally processed this Collection in 2000. In 2003, Volunteer Dorothy Garfield added found information into the Collection, and Archivist Carrie Elliott therefore reworked the finding aid.