

The Keepers of History: Scrapbooks and Albums — April through October 2009

Visitors could explore life over the past two centuries through the prism of wonderful scrapbooks from local residents and our collection. Scrapbooks are a quintessential shared American art form, beautifully presented time capsules of bygone people, places and times. Pasted fragments of memory from past generations were on display in this wonderful visual history of Washington. The innovative exhibit provided an opportunity for guests to 'walk into' a book through the use of unique paint colors, large-scale reproductions of pages and vignettes that created a sense of time and place. Chris Zaima created a beautiful old-fashioned mural of Washington on our walls as a backdrop for this exhibit. Period clothing and historic artifacts from our collection completed the experience.



Many of the scrapbooks featured in Jessica Helfand's new book, *Scrapbooks: An American History*, were on display in this exhibit. Fabulous, rarely seen scrapbooks from the collection of the Gunn Museum included:

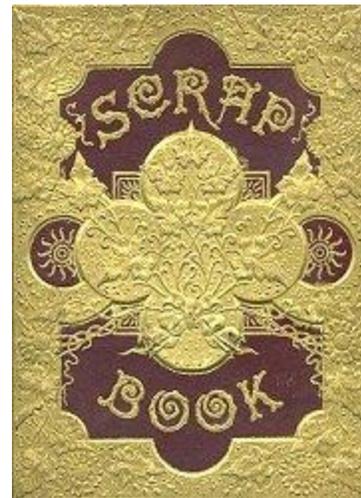
- the albums of Helen Wersebe, Marjorie Boyd and Anna DePeyster, from their days as students at the Wykeham Rise girl's school in Washington;
- the founder of Wykeham Rise, Miss Davies's, own scrapbook;
- the founder of the Mayflower, Harry Van Sinderen's Yale scrapbook;
- artist and former curator Alice Peck Snow's Smith College Scrapbook;
- Evelyn Holt Lowry's NY Opera and Theatre scrapbook;
- one of Washington's original summer residents and a publisher R.S. Barnes's scrapbook of Brooklyn dinner invitations and menus;
- the Barnes Family scrapbook of Washington Concerts and Plays 1887-1906;
- Wilhelmina Knowles's scrapbook of pressed Washington flowers and ferns;
- wonderful scrapbooks of chromolithographs from the Morehouse and Sackett Families;
- Estella West's scrapbook of The Judea Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution;

- Home study scrapbooks for domestic instruction for sewing, lace, thimbles, birds, paper dolls, scrapbook houses, paper cutting and folding from Clara Richmond, Emily Hunt and Esther Peck;
- the scrapbook of the Dramalites;
- The Washington Lions Club's scrapbook of the Washington Fair;
- The Washington Girl Scout's Scrapbook;
- Victorian Death Scrapbooks;
- and numerous Town History Scrapbooks chronicling every event in the town of Washington from 1900-1960, from WWI to WWII to the Flood.
- Modern digital scrapbooks of Kristin White, Emily Anderson, and others were also included to show the evolution of this hobby, from a parlor activity of the 19th century to the worldwide phenomenon that it has become today.

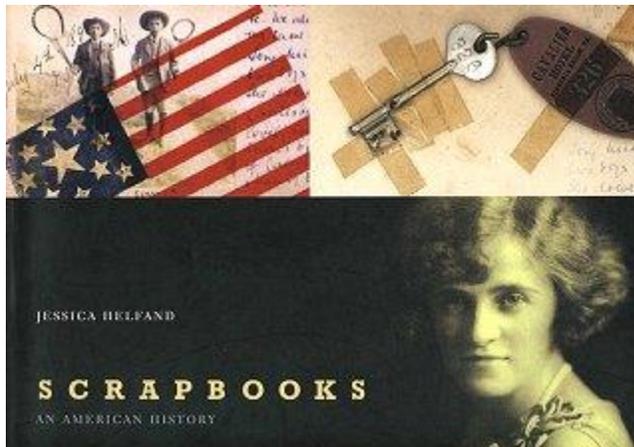
A grant from The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut, in collaboration with the Connecticut Humanities Council, made this exhibit and associated programs possible.

National Scrapbooking Day "Crop" Workshop

On National Scrapbooking Day, **Saturday, May 2nd**, the Gunn Memorial Library and Museum held a workshop, open to both beginners and expert "croppers" of all ages. The day started with a scrapbooking demonstration for beginners and a digital scrapbooking demo in the afternoon. Our consultant, Kristen White of [Creative Memories](#), offered creative tips and unique ideas, in addition to sharing her professional tools. She also displayed both digital and traditional scrapbooks that she has completed with interesting ideas on photo display.



There were raffles for cool scrapbooking supplies throughout the day. Each guest received a goodie bag with stickers, paper and helpful information. This workshop coincided with the Museum's exhibit, **The Keepers of History: Scrapbooks and Albums**.



Booksigning and Chat with Jessica Helfand

On **Saturday June 13, 2009**, during Connecticut Open House Day and Washington's Locally Grown History Day, a one-day statewide event designed to pay tribute to Connecticut's unique world of history, art, film and tourism, Jessica Helfand, the author of *Scrapbooks: An American History*, gave a book

signing and chat exploring the history of this hobby. Jessica Helfand is a graphic designer, professor at Yale University and the author of several books on graphic design and cultural criticism. Many of the scrapbooks featured in Jessica's book are on display in the Gunn Museum's new exhibit, "The Keepers of History: Scrapbooks and Albums."

Scrapbook Preservation Workshop

On **Tuesday September 15**, we hosted a scrapbook preservation workshop. Deb Wender, a national expert from Northeast Document Conservation Center in Massachusetts, taught participants how to care for their old scrapbooks so that they'll survive for future generations.

Scrapbooks present some of the most complex conservation and reformatting challenges. Composed on varying materials, adhered with problematic glues and tapes to often acidic pages, scrapbooks frequently need to be reformatted in order to preserve the intellectual information contained within. The

workshop was free and open to the public as well as library and museum professionals interested in preservation options for scrapbooks.



Participants were encouraged to bring a scrapbook from their collection for hands-on examination and discussion. Visitors also viewed the exhibition, "The Keepers of History: Scrapbooks and Albums," which included many scrapbooks featured in Jessica Helfand's new book, *Scrapbooks: An American History*, on display next door at the Gunn Museum. The exhibit and workshop were sponsored by The Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut, in collaboration with the Connecticut Humanities Council.

Digital Scrapbooking

The Gunn Memorial Library and Museum hosted a program titled "Digital Scrapbooking: An Introduction to Facebook" on Saturday **October 3rd**. While traditional scrapbooking remains a hit, the surge in popularity of social networking sites can be considered

a virtual form of scrapbooking where individuals document their daily lives by posting pictures and comments for their friends to see. Emphasis was placed on the evolution of memory keeping — from the "old" to the "new" and establishing virtual connections with friends and family. A local web specialist offered an introduction to the popular website. Participants had the opportunity to work with our specialist on one of the library's computers to create their own Facebook page. Participants were asked to register for this free program.



Washington's Community Scrapbook

The Gunn Memorial Library and Museum created a community scrapbook during the exhibition, *The Keepers of History: Scrapbooks and Albums*. Washington residents, businesses and organizations were encouraged to pick up a blank scrapbook page, fill it with their memories, photographs and objects and then return it to the museum by October 31, 2009. The completed book will become part of the Museum's permanent collection. The community scrapbook will give future generations a glimpse of what life was like in Washington in the year 2009.