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Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Ford, Roelker, Turle Family Papers
1811-1984
MssCol NYGB 18248

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Summary

- Title:** Ford, Roelker, Turle family papers, 1811-1984 (bulk 1850-1960)
- Size:** 3.3 linear feet (8 boxes)
- Source:** Gift of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2008
- Abstract:** The Ford, Roelker, and Turle families were united by intermarriage and resided in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. The members of these families include the descendants of Gordon Lester Ford (1823-1891), a prominent businessman and lawyer, and Emily Fowler Ford (1826-93), well-known poet, novelist, and granddaughter of lexicographer Noah Webster (1758-1843). This collection spans multiple generations and consists of family papers, photographs, and genealogical research papers of the Fords, Roelkers, Turles and related families in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Access:** Advance notice required. Apply at <http://www.nypl.org/mssref>. Dagerreotypes are restricted. Do not serve without permission.
- Preferred citation:** Ford, Roelker, Turle family papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
- Special formats** Certificates, Clippings, Memoirs, Photographs, Sketchbooks.

Provenance note

The family papers, photographs, and genealogical research papers of this collection were donated to The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society in 1988 by Madge Huntington Cooper.

Related materials note

Emily Fowler Ford papers. New York Public Library.
<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/fordemily.pdf>

Gordon Lester Ford papers. New York Public Library.
<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/fordg.pdf>

Ford family papers. New York Public Library.
<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/fordfamily.pdf>

Biographical note

The Ford, Roelker, and Turle families were united by intermarriage and resided in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. The members of these families include the descendants of Gordon Lester Ford (1823-1891), a prominent businessman and lawyer, and Emily Fowler Ford (1826-93), well-known poet, novelist, and granddaughter of lexicographer Noah Webster (1758-1843). Gordon and Emily had seven children and their oldest daughter, Kathleen (1856- 1932), married Robert Hobbs Turle (1846-1905), an Englishman who relocated to the United States and became a self-made businessman. They had three daughters and one of them, Millicent (1888-1967), married Alfred Roelker (1875-1953), who's father, Alfred K.F. (1837-1915), came to the United States from Germany in 1852. He was 15 years old at the time, and was taken care of by his uncles, who emigrated to the United States in the 1830s. Alfred K.F. married Catherine Greene Lawton of Newport, Rhode Island and they had Isabella (1870-1890), Anna (1871-1965) and Alfred Jr. (1875-1953). The younger Alfred went to Columbia law school, specialized in real estate law, and eventually settled in Staten Island. He also served in WWI and was a firm believer in compulsory military training. Alfred and Millicent had three daughters, Roberta, Katrina, and Hildegarde.

Scope and content note

This collection spans multiple generations and consists of family papers, photographs, and genealogical research papers of the Fords, Roelkers, Turles and related families in the 19th and 20th centuries. Alfred K.F. is used to refer to Alfred Sr. who came to the United States from Germany, and Alfred is used when referring to Alfred K.F.'s son, who was born in the United States. Papers are filed alphabetically by family name or location name.

Most of the family papers belong to the Roelkers. Some items of interest include Alfred K.F.'s letters to and from family in Germany in the mid-19th century, which document his arrival at the age of 15 in the United States; Alfred K.F.'s sisters Isabella and Anna's sketchbook and book of poems, respectively; and Alfred's son Alfred's letters from the U.S.S. FDR to his wife Millicent in 1950 regarding Cuba. Other items of interest in the family papers include Kathleen Ford Turle's memoirs of Brooklyn Heights, a signed letter by Noah Webster to the *Hartford Times* in 1840, and the journal of the Turle Family European trip in 1898.

The photographs are separated into two sub-series, files and daguerreotypes. The files contain portraits of family members, locations, and residences. Some particular points of interest are photographs of Emily Fowler Ford and Gordon Lester Ford; interior photos of the Ford home in Brooklyn Heights, New York; photographs of the Lawtons and their residences in Rhode Island; and photographs of Alfred K.F. Roelker from the mid-19th century.

The Roelkers and Lawtons are well-represented in the daguerreotypes. They span in date from the mid-to-late 19th century.

The genealogical research papers contain the combined research of multiple family members, including Madge Huntington Cooper, Anna E. Roelker, Charles Platt, Jr. (who wrote a comprehensive genealogy of the Roelkers), and others.

Some items of interest include copies of correspondence between Bernard Roelker and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; transcriptions of Emily Fowler Ford's notebook regarding her children; and photocopies of Kathleen Ford Turle's diary. Genealogical materials related to Alfred K.F. Roelker and Catherine Lawton Roelker include references to family domestic arrangements in the early 19th century in Osnabruck, Germany and Newport, Rhode Island.

Container list**Family papers, 1811-1950**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	Engs, Abigail, 1811 (Includes sampler)
	2	Ford, Emily Fowler, 1879, n.d (Includes handwritten and autographed poems)
	3	Lawton, 1854-1949 (Correspondence, some genealogical)
		Roelker
	4	Alfred, 1911, 1950 Includes a letter from Alfred to his daughter Roberta and letters from Albert to Millicent re: Cuba
	5-7	Alfred K.F., 1852-1883, 1974 Includes letters to and from family, translated from German to English. Also includes draft novels in German and English.
	8	Anna Engs, 1893, 1965-1977, n.d. Includes notebook of poetry and miscellaneous correspondence
	9	Isabella, 1887 (Sketchbook)
2	1-2	Karl, 1846, 1854 (Includes manuscript of his poetry)
	3	Millicent, 1967 (Estate)
	4	Roelker/Lawton Marriage, 1869 Two Rhode Island newspapers with marriage announcements in them
	5	Skeel, Emily Ford, 1937, 1950, 1987 Includes letter from Emily Ford Skeel to Madge Huntington Cooper
		Turle
8	1	Kathleen Ford (Memoirs of Brooklyn Heights)
2	6-7	Miscellaneous, 1898, 1906, 1930-1933 Diary of family European trip and stock certificates
	8	Webster, Noah, 1840 (Autograph letter to the <i>Hartford Times</i>)

Photographs, ca. 1847-1984**Files, ca. 1852-1984**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
2	9	Amsterdam (four black and white photos)
	10	Blackwell, Mr. and Mrs. William Margaret (Lawton)
8	2	Ellsworth
2	11	Fales
	12	Flagg
		Ford
8	3	Emily F.F., 1890
	4	Emily F.F., Undated
2	13	Gordon Lester, 1888
8	5-6	Gordon Lester, 1888, n.d.
2	14	Paul Leicester
	15	Residence (Clark Street, Brooklyn) (Two photos of interior)
	16	Germany, 1904
	17	Greene
	18	Italy, 1904
	19	Lawton
3	1	New York City, ca. 1900 (59th and Fifth Avenue)

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
3	2	Ostende, ca. 1900
		Roelker
	3-4	Alfred K.F.
8	7	Alfred, Karl, and Hugo, 1907
3	5	Anna Engs
	6	Bernard
8	8-10	Family, 1882, 1931, n.d
3	7	Isabella
	8	Isabella, Anna and Alfred
	9	Kate Lawton
	10	Millicent Turle
	11	Miscellaneous
4	1	Residences (New York City and Osnabruck, Germany)
		Unidentified woman,
	2	Skeel, Ella Ford
	3	Taylor, Mr and Mrs. Saunders
	4	Taunton, England (Includes postcards and map)
	5	Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Fred C. (Roberta)
		Turle
	6-7	Kathleen Gordon
	8	Robert
	9	Roberta, 1891
	10	Turner, Mr. and Mrs. James Varnum (Catherine Greene)
	11	Varnum, Brig. General James M. (Photogravure of portrait)
	12	Ward, Lt. Colonel Samuel Photocopy of photos of him and his residence, Broadway and Bond St., NYC
	13	Webster, Noah and Rebecca
	14	Wilson/ Sloane wedding, 1899 Group photo includes Alfred and Anna Roelker, Lawrence S. and Charles S. Butler taken in Stockbridge, Mass.
	15	Woodlawn Cemetary, Roelker plot
	16	Unsorted

Daguerreotypes, ca. 1847-1880s

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
6	1	Blackwell, Margaret (Lawton)
	2	Corday, Charlotte
	3-4	Dockray, Abby Engs (Lawton)
	5	Fuller, Margaret
	6	Greene, Ray
		Lawton
	7	Alfred
	8	Edward Wing
	9	Francis II
	10	Isabella Greene Turner
	11	Mary Engs
		Roelker
	12-14	Alfred K.F.
6	15	Bernard

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
7	1-4	Catharine Greene Lawton
	5	Johann Friedrich
		Turle
	6	Kathleen Gordon Ford
	7-8	Robert
	9-10	Turner, Dr. James Varnum
	11	Unidentified (Possibly a Roelker)
8	11	Unidentified woman

Genealogical Research Papers

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
4	17	Comfort, Mary Lawton Fales
	18	Flagg
		Ford
8	12	Coat of Arms
4	19	Emily
		Includes transcription of notebook about her children (1857-1864)
	20	Gordon Lester
5	1	Miscellaneous
	2	Ford and Turle (Copies of marriage certificates)
	3	Greene
	4	Greenleaf, William and Mary (daughter married Noah Webster)
	5	Longfellow, H.W.
		Copies of his letters to Bernard Roelker (1856-1864)
	6	Platt, Roberta
		Roelker
	7-8	Alfred
	9	Alfred and Millicent
		Copies of marriage certificates, copy of a letter about their wedding (1905)
	10-12	Anna
8	13	Anna (Memiors)
5	13	Bernard
	14	History and Genealogy
	15	Residences
	16	Steele
		Taylor
	17	Hildegarde
	18	Saunders and Hildegarde
	19	Turle, Kathleen Gordon Ford (Copies of diaries)
	20	Varnum House
	21	Webster, Noah