Maja Schjolin (1913-1982)

Papers

(1982-1989)

1 linear ft.

Acquisition Number: 1982-10

Acquisition: Materials transferred to Archives from Cranbrook Institute of Science in 1982.

Access: Access to the collection is unrestricted.

Copyright: Copyright to this collection is held by the Cranbrook Educational Community.

Preferred Citation: Maja Schjolin Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Photographs: Retained in this collection.

Processing: Laura MacNewman, July 2016
BIOGRAPHY

May Joan “Maja” Seefried was born April 24, 1913 in Pontiac, Michigan where she attended Pontiac Central High School. She graduated from the University of Michigan in 1934 and taught at The Business Institute in Pontiac. In 1938, she married Hans O. Schjolin in St. Joseph, Indiana. Hans, born in Sweden on July 29, 1900, immigrated to the United States in 1923 and settled in Pontiac. He was a civil engineer and inventor with many patents and served as chief engineer for new development at General Motors Corporation’s Truck and Coach Division. Hans died in 1981.

Maja was an active member of the community and participant in many organizations, including the American Association of University Women, Birmingham Garden Club, Birmingham and Bloomfield Art Association, and University of Michigan Presidents Club. She was President of the Southeast District of the Michigan Federation of Women’s Clubs (MFWC), and was also a member of Christ Church Cranbrook and the Cranbrook Gardens Auxiliary.

In 1951, the Schjolins moved to a three acre property in Birmingham, Michigan three miles southeast of Cranbrook. Maja cultivated the wild plants growing on the property and added to them. Over the course of thirty years, Maja created the largest and most diverse wild plant garden in Michigan, with over 300 varieties of plants. Her wildflower garden was widely visited attended by garden enthusiasts and tour groups, and often attracted publicity in the local press. She developed a close friendship with botanist James R. Wells of Cranbrook Institute of Science who became responsible for managing the Schjolin property after her death.

Maja died of cancer at the Hospice of Southeastern Michigan in Southfield, Michigan on May 12, 1982. She bequeathed her property and an endowment fund to Cranbrook Educational Community. The objectives of the endowment were to provide funding in order to preserve the home and garden as a place of beauty; to defend endangered plant species; to provide scientific leadership for planning of an arboretum; and to expand botanical and environmental education.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection is largely comprised of news clippings and photographs collected by Schjolin in connection with her wildflower garden and its significance as an educational resource. The papers are posthumous and largely relate to the bequest of the house and garden to Cranbrook Institute of Science. There are also some papers relating to the management of the Schjolin house and garden as a visitor site in association with Cranbrook Institute of Science. Due to the size of the collection, it has been arranged alphabetically.
Box 1
1. Biographical – Maja Schjolin Memorial Service, 1982
4. Legal -- Bequest of “Schjolin House” and “Maja’s Garden”, Feb.-Aug. 1984
5. Legal -- Estate of Maja Schjolin, Items 1-6, 1975-1982
17. Theatre Performances
18. Travel Brochures
19. Women’s Clubs

Box 2
Ephemera – Certificate of The American Forestry Association; Mrs Federation Badge
Scrapbook – Garden-related clippings, 1970

Box 3
Scrapbook – Travel photographs, postcards and menus

Box 4
Scrapbook – Newsclippings -- Women’s organizations and Maja Schjolin, 1940s-1960s

Box 5
Scrapbook – Personal photographs and garden-related newsclippings, 1970s
1. Oversize Photographs – Carl Milles (one signed)
2. Oversize Photographs – Cranbrook, 1912-1978
3. Oversize Photographs – Maja Schjolin