



# Guide to the Gertrude Conolan Papers, 1890s-1920s

---

This collection guide was produced in **April 2023**.  
This PDF version was created on **April 2, 2026**.

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

[askRL@duke.edu](mailto:askRL@duke.edu)

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

---

## Table of Contents

---

<a href="#">Summary</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Background</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Administrative Information</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Related Materials</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Names and Subjects</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Collection Inventory</a> .....	6

## Summary

---

**Collection Title:**

Gertrude Conolan papers, 1890s-1920s

**Source:**

Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture

**Creator:**

Conolan, Gertrude, 1872-1936; Conolan, Amy Catherine, 1871-1925

**Abstract:**

Gertrude Conolan (1872-1936) was a women's suffrage advocate and WSPU member in Great Britain. Collection includes an address book with information on different suffrage organizations in Great Britain, photographs and illustrations of Conolan, and select family correspondence. Acquired as part of the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture.

**Extent:**

2.5 Linear Feet (2 boxes, 1 oversize folder)

**Language:**

Materials in English.

**Collection ID:**

RL.12087

**Permalink:**

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1mx6f>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Gertrude Conolan papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Background

---

**Scope and Content**

Collection documents some of Conolan's work as a suffragette in early twentieth-century Great Britain. A small address book contains information about different suffrage organizations throughout Great Britain, and a

newspaper clipping previews a June 1908 WSPU suffrage demonstration in Hyde Park, in which Conolan took part. Photographs show Conolan at home and addressing a crowd. Letters from her father and step-mother provide biographical information about Conolan and her family, in addition to a copper engraving plate for Conolan's visiting cards, a ceramic tile photograph (likely of Conolan's mother), and portraits of Conolan created by her sister, Amy Catherine. Also included are some writings about the seasonal transition from summer to fall.

## **Biographical/Historical**

Gertrude Mary Conolan was born on 22 October 1872 to Francis Conolan and Sophia Chetwynd in Cheshire, England. Conolan was a suffragette and an active member of the Women's Social and Political Union in Great Britain, as well as in other groups such as the New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage, Actresses' Franchise League, and Federated Council of Suffrage Societies. She took part in suffrage demonstrations, including one on 10 June 1908 in Hyde Park. Conolan passed away in 1936.

Amy Catherine Conolan, Gertrude's older sister, was born on 29 December 1871 in Cheshire. Amy Conolan was an artist and created several portraits of her sister. She passed away in a house fire in January 1925.

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was a women's suffrage group founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankurst and her daughters Christabel and Sylvia. The WSPU campaigned for women's suffrage in Great Britain and was militant in nature. The WSPU dissolved in 1917.

Sources: Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866-1928* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 138; England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007 (accessed via Ancestry.com, 20 April 2023); Manchester Evening News, January 10, 1925 (accessed via Newspapers.com, 28 April 2023); Wikipedia (accessed 20 April 2023).

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## **Administrative Information**

---

### **Publication Statement**

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive  
Duke University

Durham 27708

[askRL@duke.edu](mailto:askRL@duke.edu)

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

### **Use Restrictions**

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the Rubenstein Library's Citations, Permissions, and Copyright guide.

### **Acquisition Information**

The Gertrude Conolan papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase from Marlborough Rare Books in 2017.

### **Processing Information**

Processed by Leah Tams, April 2023

Accessions described in this collection guide: 2023-0050

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## **Related Materials**

---

### **Related Material**

Researchers may also be interested in the following collection at Duke:

Woman's suffrage realia and ephemera collection, 1894-1920 and undated.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## **Names and Subjects**

---

- Suffragists -- Great Britain

- Women -- Suffrage -- Great Britain
- Suffrage: English
- Women artists -- England
- Women -- Photographs
- Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture
- Women's Social and Political Union (Great Britain)

---

## Collection Inventory

---

Copper engraving plate for visiting cards, circa 1890s-1920s

Box 1

### Scope and Contents

Plate says "Miss Gertrude Conolan"

---

Correspondence, 1914-1916, circa 1890s-1920s

Box 1

### Scope and Contents

Contains two letters, one from Conolan's father (Francis) and one from her step-mother (Louise). The letter from her father appears to be in answer to questions that Conolan had and addresses her birth and family history. The letter from her step-mother was written about a year after her father's death and addresses grieving, settling debts, and Conolan moving to the countryside. Also included with this material is an empty envelope addressed to Conolan and two unused pieces of paper with Conolan's Medfield Street address at the top.

---

Suffrage demonstration clipping, 10 June 1908

Oversize-folder 1

### Scope and Contents

Clipping from The Daily Chronicle entitled "The Demonstration of the Militant Suffragists" about a WSPU demonstration being held at Hyde Park. The clipping features portraits of 20 notable women suffragists.

---

Women's suffrage address book, circa 1910s

Box 1

### Scope and Contents

Small pocket notebook including names and addresses of women's suffrage and women's rights societies in Great Britain. Conolan has listed the societies in alphabetical order. Societies range from political (Conservative and Minorist Women's Franchise Association, New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage) to vocational (Gymnastic Teachers Suffrage Society, Artist's Suffrage League) to national (Austrian and New Zealand Voter's Association, Irish Women's Franchise League) to religious (Catholic League for Women's Suffrage, Jewish League for Women's Suffrage). Notable societies included in the

notebook are the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and the Women's Freedom League. Men's societies that supported women's suffrage and rights are also included.

---

Photographs, circa 1870s-1920s Box 1  
Box 2  
Oversize-folder 1

**Scope and Contents**

Consists of three photographs. One photograph (Oversize Folder 1) shows Conolan standing in an open carriage in front of a crowd, likely addressing them, while another (Box 1) shows Conolan standing in front of her house with her dog. A third photograph (Box 2) is printed on a ceramic tile and may be Conolan's mother.

---

Portraits of Conolan, circa 1906 Box 1

**Scope and Contents**

Four portraits of Conolan created by her sister, Amy Catherine. One portrait is done in watercolor, while the others are graphite.

---

Writings: Before the Fall, 1899 August Box 1

**Scope and Contents**

Nature writing about summer turning into fall, which begins with a quote from Richard Jefferies' Last Essays. The rest of the piece describes the flowers, birds, and other plants and life in the countryside. It is signed "F.M. Collins."