



Mary Elizabeth Parsons (Hawver) (1859-1947)

Biographical Sketch by Hany Abdoun, Archives Volunteer

Mary Elizabeth Parsons was born on August 1, 1859, in Chicago, Illinois. Although she had little formal education, she was always interested in gardening and horticulture. She came to California in 1883 and through her cousin, William Kent (a Republican Congressman), she met Alice Eastwood, Curator of Botany at the California Academy of Sciences.

Mary Elizabeth Parsons was the author of *The Wild Flowers of California*, first published in 1897 and later re-published in 1902, 1906, 1925 and finally in 1955. The publication by the California Academy of Sciences has a preface by John Thomas Howell, Curator of Botany. In 1912 she married Dr. J.C. Hawver, a dentist from Auburn, California.

Mary Elizabeth Parsons Hawver was a member of the California Academy of Sciences (beginning in 1900), the Tamalpais Centre Women's Club, Sunny Hills (a home for children) and Chairman of the Farm Committee.

Mary Elizabeth Parsons Hawver died on December 21, 1947.

Sources Consulted:

Biographical Sketch, California Academy of Sciences, January 1977

Index Cards of California Academy of Sciences Staff and Members

San Francisco Chronicle, May 17, 1980