

Introduction

Lisbeth Gladfelter Fish was the oldest child of Dr. Noah M. Glatfelter, the man who wrote the family genealogy book and was essential in forming the Casper Glatfelter Association of America. Lisbeth led an amazing life — she was a tireless woman who was involved in so much throughout her life and who, after moving to Denver early in the 20th century, was a consistent force for the area’s developing society, focusing on a wide range of community groups. As far as we know, she was involved in more than 40 organizations throughout her life. Sarah Melcher gave us a presentation on Lisbeth, her great-grandmother, and this was done not so much in a timeline but in the various roles that defined Lisbeth’s life:

- A Student and Teacher
- A Domestic Scientist
- A Wife and Mother
- A “Farmerette”
- A Club Leader
- A Poet
- A Glatfelter

Lisbeth was actually much more than all this as combined, she was a powerful civic leader, a major player in early Denver Society from the early 1900s under 1950, and at all times she was an advocate for people helping people. One point of note is that we don’t know when she began using the name “Gladfelter” but she was known by that in all the documentation we have.

Lisbeth the Student and Teacher

Lisbeth was born Oct 17, 1869 in St. Louis, where her father was a surgeon. As a young woman, she gravitated towards learning and teaching what she termed “Domestic Science”. “Lizzie” (as her name sometimes appeared in early newspapers) graduated from St. Louis Normal School Jan. 1890 (aged 20), at which time she received her teacher’s certificate. As “Lisbeth”, she is listed as a substitute teacher in a census of May 1, 1891. She is listed by the Board of Education in 1892-93 as “3rd Ass’t” teacher, and at the Webster School 1892-94 as full teacher.

Among the many places she traveled to extend her learning, she attended a lecture at the Art Institute of Chicago 1893, and she probably attended Chautauqua (NY) Cooking School July 8-19, 1895. She attended Washington University as a Special Student 1895-1896 and was a teacher at Bryant School (in St. Louis) 1896-97 (Domestic Economy). In 1897-1898, she was accepted as a student to attend Harvard University where she studied General Chemistry. In an interesting correspondence from Harvard to her father, Dr., Noah, she wrote:

Dear Papa, I have decided not to buy the microscope. I was helped to that decision by a friend here who told me it was too high a price for the instrument. This friend went over the instrument with me and showed me how to select a microscope — what points were important and which not important and I have learned a thing or two about them. I learned that Bauch & Lomb give teachers 40% discount & a selection from their stock would give more satisfaction in every way than a single chance to make a choice. The trouble is, I want to use it early in the fall to **make an impression** (*Sarah’s emphasis*) on the school authorities over my rival. So I expect to get one somehow before then.”

While there, she also got interested in Mycology (fungi aka mushrooms) and joined the Boston Mycology Society.

And the newspapers noted in Jan 22, 1901: “Miss Lizbeth M. Gladfelter, who has charge of the domestic science department of the [Peabody and Clinton] public schools.” Among other things, she was avidly teaching, promoting, and learning more about what she called “Domestic Science”.

Lisbeth the Domestic Scientist

“Domestic economics” is something which emerged as an area of focus for women after the Civil War, to make households cleaner and more efficient, and to help women excel in the household. Lisbeth went a step further and called this “domestic science” which is based on following specific rules for cleanliness and a healthy home, and for maintaining an economical yet comfortable home. As a student, she was avid about helping define and promote domestic science in part to help women run their own homes well, but also to help women get good jobs as household helpers.

As a teacher, she taught several different aspects of domestic science. A good example of her concept of domestic sciences comes from the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, Sept. 18, 1898, publication of the following illustration in which it notes “Instructor Lisbeth Gladfelter gives a lesson on household economy. Pupils in two buildings will have lessons first as an experiment.” This illustration shows in a very specific order the process for cleaning an oil lantern to prevent spreading toxic oils and dirt, and in saving the fragile parts for last so that they don’t get broken. The “system” here is a classic example of Lisbeth’s passion for domestic science being done optimally. One can imagine her applying her Harvard microscope to study



the toxins on the inside of the lantern as part of developing this system.

Also in 1898, she wrote and published *An Outline of Domestic Science, Embracing 80 Lessons*. “The course to extend over two years. Each Class to receive One Lesson per week of one and one-half hours

each. Designed for use in the Public Schools. December, 1898". The focus of this included: Household economics, Cleanliness, and Serving good multi-course meals." At the bottom of the Introduction we read: "It is the writer's earnest hope that efforts will be made through her dearly beloved State to introduce Domestic Science into the various Public School curriculums. The results of such a step will soon prove

loa's "Home Economics." It is the writer's earnest hope that efforts will be made through her dearly beloved State to introduce Domestic Science into the various Public School curriculums. The results of such a step will soon prove the worth of the movement.

LISBETH M. GLADFELTER.

the worth of the movement."

And just to prove how important this 29-page document is, the copy quoted from here was found online as part of the collection of the Library of Congress. If you think about the millions of people who have millions and millions of written works they think are important, and the vast majority of that is NOT in the Library of Congress, while in fact at least three of her works are online as part of the Library of Congress's holding — this should say something about how significant these works of hers were at the time, and perhaps still are.



This is Lisbeth in her cooking class in St. Louis c. 1900 (she was ~31 years old).

Lisbeth traveled a lot, sometimes for pleasure but also when necessary for her on-going pursuit of Domestic Science studies. And she was important enough at the time that her travels made the news: "Miss Lisbeth M. Gladfelter, a teacher in the domestic science department in the public schools, departed Wednesday afternoon for an extended tour of the East. Miss Gladfelter is on the program of the Eastern

Manual Training Association at Buffalo. She will also attend the National Council of Domestic Science at Lake Placid, New York, and the National Educational Association at Detroit.” [St. Louis Post Dispatch June 26, 1901].

This Domestic Science conference in Lake Placid was the 3rd of at least 4 such annual conferences. The multi-day conferences were attended by experts and students from multiple countries. Many of the topics were about education; some topics were about policy, and the attendees even issued recommendations to government officials about laws and other issues concerning domestic science.

In 1902, the St. Louis newspapers noted that "Mrs. Lisbeth Gladfelter Fish (as she was married by this time) went to Florida last week to conduct a course in domestic science in the State teachers' summer school, located at Tallahassee. The course will last two months. Mrs. Fish will conduct classes in cooking, sewing and home sanitation.” [Saint Louis Review, June 22, 1902]. All in all, Lisbeth “officially” taught Domestic Science for 10 years in St. Louis, from 1898-1908. And she taught outside of the schools also. For example, the *St. Louis Republican*, on May 21, 1903, wrote about Lisbeth and her sister working with a Jewish organization:

United Jewish Associate Pupils Make a Display:

An exhibit of the work done by pupils of the United Jewish Educational Association’s [sic] school at Ninth and Carr streets was shown yesterday afternoon.

The work of the pupils in the cooking department was complemented, many simple and artistic dishes being displayed. This department has two teachers, Mrs. Lisbeth Gladfelter Fish and Miss Alice Gladfelter....

One of the interesting things about this article is it brings to light an amazing trait about Lisbeth, in that almost all her life was devoted to helping people no matter what their race, creed, color, or religion; she simply wanted do what she could to help people.

Lisbeth the Wife and Mother

Lisbeth married Albert Goodrich Fish on April 13, 1902 in St. Louis, who she had met in the Ethical Cultural Society. The *St. Louis Republic* wrote about this on April 13, 1902, as noted by these excerpts from that article:

- “The wedding of Miss Lisbeth M. Glatfelter and Mr. Albert Goodrich Fish took place at the home of the bride's parents, Doctor and Mrs. Noah Glatfelter on Thursday evening at 6 o'clock. The ceremony was witnessed by only the relatives and a few intimate friends of the couple and was followed by a dinner.”
- “The ceremony was performed by Doctor Walter L. Sheldon of the Ethical Culture Society, of which the couple are members.”

Third annual conference

ON

HOME ECONOMICS

Lake Placid Clubhouse

28 June—5 July

SUMMARY OF SESSIONS

Friday, 28 June, 10 a. m.

Conference called to order by Mrs Ellen H. Richards, chairman

Welcome, Melvil Dewey, president Lake Placid Club

Keynote of conference

Courses of study for grade schools. Discussion

Household arts in country schools. How to teach them

Miss Alberta Thomas, Muskegon Mich.

Discussion

Mrs Jean Joy, Toronto Canada

Physical development by means of housework

Miss A. M. Homans, director Boston school of gymnastics

Friday, 4 p. m.

Drive to John Brown's grave

Friday, 8 p. m.

Hospitality in the modern home

Mrs Mary J. Lincoln, Boston

English methods in practical hygiene

Miss Alice Ravenhill, special commissioner of Board of education for England and Wales and of Sanitary institute (London) on Domestic science and hygiene in American schools and colleges

- “The bride was dressed in a mousseline de soje gown, trimmed with old lace worn by her mother thirty-seven years ago.” (NOTE: many years ago this lace collar was framed behind glass, and it now currently resides with Lisbeth’s grandson Albert G. Melcher, in Aurora, CO.)
- “From 8 to 10:30 the reception was held to which 400 guests had been invited.”
- “The unusually large number of handsome presents filled one room entirely...”
- “Among the guests at the reception were some of the most prominent educators of the public schools of this city, Miss Glatfelter having been supervisor of the Domestic Science Department of public schools for several years.”

Lisbeth was Albert’s second wife, as his first wife, Agnes Mary Stewart Fish, had died in 1895. Albert and Agnes had 2 daughters and a son, but their son Edgar died TB in 1893, nine years before Lisbeth married Albert.

Albert and Lisbeth had 5 children:

- Martha Jane Fish, born October 9, 1903
- Esther Mary Fish, born March 22, 1905
- Alberta Electa Fish, born June 7, 1906
- Theodore Goodrich Fish (aka Teddy), born May 7, 1908 in St. Louis
- Frederick Goodrich Fish born October 7, 1913 in Denver

An interesting note about Teddy is that he was named after then-President Theodore Roosevelt, whom Lisbeth greatly admired. Lisbeth wrote to the President about her son Teddy, and we have it in the family history that Pres. Roosevelt personally wrote back to thank her. We hope t find that letter some day, if possible.

In 1910, the Fish family moved from St. Louis to a farm near Golden, Colorado, as Albert Fish himself was unwell and was told to leave St. Louis for someplace like dry such as Colorado, or stay and die. Also, Ruth Fish (one of Lisbeth’s step-daughters from Albert’s first marriage) had tuberculosis (TB), and in fact went on from Colorado to Arizona to try to recover, but died there in 1913. On January 9, 1911, Lisbeth’s son Teddy died in Golden, 4 months before his 3rd birthday. On April 2, 1911, Lisbeth’s father Noah M. Glatfelter was found unconscious in the yard in St. Louis and died later that day.



In the picture to the right, Lisbeth is with Esther, Teddy, Martha, and Alberta (though possibly not in that order), c1906, at their homestead in Golden.

In October, 1913, *Colorado Transcript* (Golden, CO) newspaper noted: “A. G. Fish and Mr. Gardner have moved their families to Denver.”

Lisbeth the “Farmerette”

Lisbeth always had a fascination with plants, nature, and gardening. As previously mentioned, she was in the Mycology (Mushroom) Club at Harvard. Somewhere in that time frame, she got her father interested in mushrooms and he subsequently became quite a mycologist in St. Louis. Several mushrooms which he

first

- GILBERT, Hon. B. D., Clayville, N. Y.: Two specimens of ferns (35860); 9 specimens of *Asplenium* (36048). Exchange.
- GILBERT, Prof. C. H. (See under Leland Stanford Junior University.)
- GILL, Dr. THEODORE, Smithsonian Institution: Specimens of *Mus musculus* (35941, 36323.)
- GILLIAN, Rev. J. D., Pocatello, Idaho: Lumbar vertebra of a camel. 35275.
- GLASSFORD, Maj. WILLIAM, U. S. A., Chief Signal Officer, San Juan, P. R.: Three birds' skins. Deposit. 36489.
- GLATFELTER, Dr. N. M., St. Louis, Mo.: Seventy plants (35376); 25 specimens of violets (35494). Exchange.
- GRAENICHER, Dr. SIGMUND, Milwaukee, Wis.: Twelve specimens of Diptera (two species new to the collection). 35926.
- GRAHAM, G. A., Graham, Tex. Received through Department of Agriculture: Specimen of *Daucus pusillus*, from Texas. 36661.
- GRANT, F. H. MCK., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Three hundred and eighty-nine specimens of Eocene and Oligocene fossils from Hamilton, Victoria, Australia. Exchange. 36095.
- GRAVES, J. A., Susquehanna, Pa.: Two plants. Exchange. 36175.
- GRAY HERBARIUM, Boston, Mass.: Plants. (35933, 36401, 36138.) Exchange.
- GRAY, R. P., East Orland, Me.: Specimen

identified are famously named after him. This one example is from the Smithsonian (!) Annual Report 1900-01; and there is at least one more like it:



We have this picture of Lisbeth where she (or perhaps Albert) wrote *The "Farmerette"*, at the house in Golden/Fairmount.

We have interesting newspaper snippets about this "farmerette" farm life Fairmount/Golden, and also from their second home, Seven Elms on W. 37th. These are just a few such snippets:

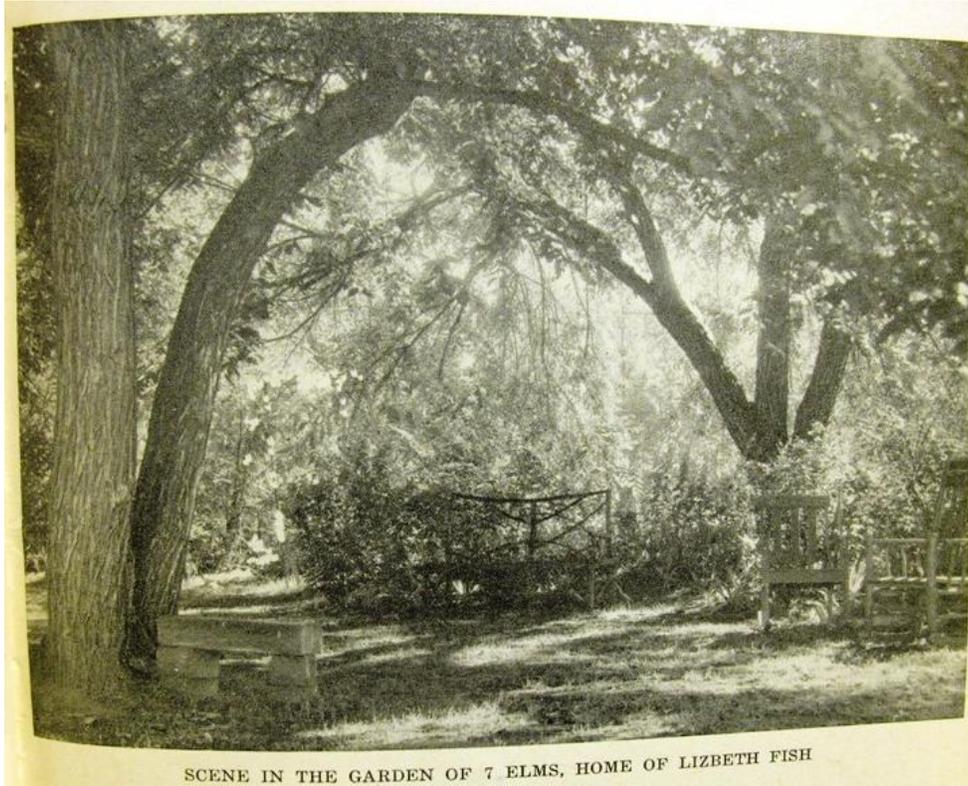
- 3/3/1912: "For Sale - Two full-blooded Brown Leghorn roosters. Golden Colo."
- 4/21/1912: "Man on truck and fruit ranch near Golden. Phone Golden 964."
- 3/1/1914: "CHOICE Italian bees, \$4 per colony. Apply to Mrs. A. G. Fish, 2711 W. 37th ave."



In 1913,
moved to
they named
and Albert

they left the farm and
Denver, to a location
"Seven Elms". Lisbeth
spent their lives making

this property a beautiful garden retreat, complete with a reflecting pond. Seven Elms is on the National Register of



SCENE IN THE GARDEN OF 7 ELMS, HOME OF LIZBETH FISH

Historical Places.

Lisbeth the Club Woman

Immediately after arriving in Golden/Fairmont in 1910, Lisbeth founded the Fairmount "Mothers' Circle" in 1910, a local branch of a national organization. From there, she spread outward, working with many women's clubs in the area. On November 2, 1911 the *Denver Post* newspaper mentioned, "A very enthusiastic meeting of the Mother's Circle was held at the Fairmount School last Friday... "The election of officers' resulted as follows: Mrs. A. G. Fish, president..."

Within these clubs, she was merging her domestic science studies and teachings with her role as wife and mother, and very much uniting those with her newly emerging role as a civic and influencer. And of course, she was using these "mothers circles" and future clubs to help make women's (and others') lives better.

On December 14, 1911, a newspaper article wrote, "At Arvada on Tuesday a Mothers' Circle was organized, a representative meeting of the teachers and mothers of that place being present. Mrs. A. G. Fish made a splendid talk regarding the importance of the movement..."

Later, a local paper wrote, "Yesterday afternoon an interesting Mothers' meeting was held at the High school building. Mrs. T. F. Wagenen, president of the Colorado Congress of Mothers, was present. Others who spoke were Mrs. A. G. Fish, president of the Fairmount Mothers' Circle..."

In another 1911 *Denver Post* newspaper article, she is representing her Fairmount Mothers' Circle at a regional gathering in a nearby town in preparation for going national: "Last Monday there was an excellent meeting of the Wheatridge Mothers' circle. Mrs A. G. Fish gave a talk on the national meeting which is to be held in St. Louis, March 20-28."

In 1912, she was a member of the Golden Circle of the Colorado Congress of Mother and later the District "O" Chairman for the Red Cross Christmas membership campaign committee. In January, 1913, she gained an appointment from the Governor of Colorado: "Mrs. A. G. Fish... was nominated by a unanimous vote as the Grange candidate for the member on the state board of agriculture and the legislative committee was instructed to request Governor Ammons to appoint Mrs. Fish to this position." In 1914, the *Rocky Mountain News* noted that Lisbeth was on the schedule for The Program for the twentieth annual convention of the Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, to be held in Greeley the first week in October, "Wednesday Oct. 7 will be largely given over to the various reports from various state committees, and talks on child welfare. Mrs. A. G. Fish will speak on 'The New Education'".

As we see her become more and more emerged in clubs, we see these activities combined with her Domestic Scientist cooking skills, as on Feb. 6, 1916 The *Denver Post* wrote: "The Building committee of the Woman's club was delightfully entertained on Monday at a luncheon given by Mrs. A. G. Fish."

Lisbeth began using her club positions to actively promote "Colorado Made Goods" as a way to support the Colorado economy and workers, especially during and after WWI. In 1915, she was one of 6 members of the Housewives' League to participate in making apple pies for a contest as a way to promote Colorado's apple farms: "All the pies will be apple pies, because Colorado produced so many apples this year. All the ingredients, in fact, are to be Colorado products. The contest will be judge on method, rapidity, quality, appropriateness of dress, neatness and dexterity" (the *Denver Post*, October 19, 1915).

December 30, 1917, the *Denver Post* wrote about “ Food Conservation Drive Headed by Women...” which of course included Lisbeth.

In 1929, she received the high honor of represented The Denver Home Garden Club by planting a tree on the

Capital
Denver:



ground of the
Colorado State
Building in

Lisbeth the Poet

We don't know when Lisbeth began writing poetry, but she was certainly writing while she was in school, and poems are included in her Harvard notebooks. The vast majority of her poems were about nature: the mountains, the fields, the flowers, winter or summer, meadows... Occasionally wrote about travel, such as about visiting New York City and friends in Westchester County.

She wrote poems for magazines and special events, and was included in a *Poetry Review* magazine publication in 1929. She was included in the book *Colorado Poets*, a book published in 1935. Her own works include *Wild Iris, Odes and Lyrics*, a book published 1936; *Chinook, A Welcome Wind*, a book published in 1940 with a second publication in 1941; *Late Harvest*, a booklet published in 1951 (4 years after her beloved husband Albert died); and *Home Thoughts*, a booklet published in 1954.



Our Victory Garden

A fleshy farmerette and a lanky business-man
Dug a garden on their sunny spot of lawn.
Said she, "We'll raise fresh food enough to can
For days when all the garden crops are gone."

They spaded, raked, and sowed the seed in neatest rows,
All summer long they hoed, and sprayed big bugs.
They watered plants each morning with long garden hose
And nipped the damage done by slimy slugs.

The maiden's dream of food to can, came true—
Beans, peas and beets and cabbages were ripe,
And lettuce stalks just grew and grew and grew,
While "Toms" bore ruddy fruit of tasty type.

The landscaped lawn now sports a "lifted face",
It proudly shows what amateurs can grow
To help the "raising food for Victory" race,
And bluff cold winter with its ice and snow.

Our greeting card this Christmas tells the tale—
We'll hope for food in plenty thru the world.
And "do our bit" till **world peace** will prevail
And flags of all the Nations be unfurled.

—Lisbeth Fish

She also wrote a poem for their annual Christmas cards, as in this example below, and so much more:

Jumping Forward

Lisbeth continued being all of these amazing things. Here is a picture of Lisbeth the wife, mother, and now grandmother, in 1935 with Burton Walters Melcher II (aka "Pete) in her lap, Albert Goodrich Melcher, and Frances Jane Melcher (children of her oldest daughter, Martha Fish Melcher).

This picture was taken just a short number of days or weeks before Albert died June 11, 1947.
From left to right: Gretel Bear and Donna Bear (daughters of Esther, the 2nd daughter), Albert Goodrich Melcher, Albert Goodrich Fish, Lisbeth Fish, Frances Jane Melcher, and Burton Walters Melcher aka "Pete".



Here is one of her poems which is dedicated to her husband:

Albert Fish's Masterpiece - July 27, 1954 (in *Home Thoughts*)

He painted the beautiful trees so near.
I begged him to call them mine.
The trees reminded me of him somehow
So tall, so straight and fine.
He seemed to feel an artist's pride
in the work of his brush
Which his genius tried.
Strangers have looked
To see the art no one denied.
They praised the artist so well.
A master hand the should did guide.
Oh! Master mind Thy dream was great,
And we enjoy what you create.

Lisbeth the Glattfelter

Lisbeth also attended Glattfelter Reunions at Heimwald Park for many, many years. She brought her sisters with her on certain occasions, as noted in the local papers.

The *Gazette and Daily York* newspaper, in August 11, 1953, wrote an article titled “Denver Woman Here for Reunion”: “As perennial to York county as the fair is the annual visit of Mrs. Lisbeth Fish, of Denver, Colo., who has been traveling here for the Glattfelter family reunion since the custom began 47 years ago. Mrs. Fish is again in York and last night entertained several members of the clan...though going on 83...”



In this picture, Lisbeth is in the front seated on the left and E. S. Glattfelter, “president of the family” is seated with her. Behind from left are Dr. E. A. Glattfelter, Vice President; Dr. Charles Glattfelter, treasurer and historian; and Auburn H. Glattfelter, secretary. The article goes on to list at least 20 other guests who she entertained at the Hotel Yorktown. And then it mentions that she flies home from to Denver from Washington.

Lisbeth was born October 17, 1869, and died September 26, 1955. Truly a remarkable woman.

