

# A Guide to the Olcott Family Records, 1879-2002

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A Collection in Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History RG 364  
Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History  
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## Title Statement

A Guide to the Olcott Family Records, 1879-2002

**Subtitle:**

**Collection:** RG 364

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## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid derived from MS Word, created by Gregory Pierce, 25 August 2020

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

**Collection number**

RG 364

**Language**

English

**Creator**

Olcott Family

**Extent**

1 box.

**Repository**

Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History

## Administrative Information

**Access Restrictions**

The collection is open for research.

**Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

**Acquisition Information**

Gift of Deborah Klaus on November 7, 2018.

**Preferred Citation**

Olcott Family Records, Collection # RG 364, Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History

# Custodial History

Deborah Klaus found these items at an estate sale in Glencarlyn, Arlington, for 5608 South 1st Street. The house at 5608 South 1st Street was put to auction in November 2018 after Mary Olcott Greiner-Broman passed away in September 2018. Klaus donated the materials to the Arlington Public Library on November 7, 2018.

## Biographical/Historical Information

Alice Hedrick married Wareham Harry Olcott on March 8, 1884 when Alice was 25 years old and Harry was 32. Prior to marrying Harry, Alice attended Mount Holyoke College, graduating in 1880. The couple had five children between 1885 and 1900: Ella Mindwell, Jennie Louise, Alice Griswold, Margaret Thompson, and John Hedrick. In 1900, Alice and Harry built a house at 5608 1st St. S, Glencarlyn, Arlington-the land was on the plot adjacent to Alice's brother, Edmund's, house. Alice and Harry raised their family in this house, and after Harry's death on May 6, 1928, Alice lived in the house with her daughter Margaret until her own death on March 13, 1952. Margaret remained in the house until her niece, Mary Olcott Greiner, purchased it in 1979.

Ella Mindwell Olcott married Joseph Edmund Thompson and they had one child named Sarah. Jennie Louise Olcott married Joseph Singleton McCord. Jennie and Joseph moved to New York City after their marriage where they had two children, Alexander and Lucy.

Alice Griswold Olcott moved to Farmington, New Mexico, in 1919 to live with George Edward Bentley. The couple married on January 29, 1920 and they made their home raising cattle and farming in Farmington, excepting three years spent in Montana. George Bentley died unexpectedly of a heart attack on January 31, 1938. Alice G. remained in New Mexico for five years after George's death; she returned to Virginia in September 1943.

Margaret Thompson Olcott, like her mother, attended Mount Holyoke College and graduated in 1917. Margaret worked as an Assistant Librarian and later Economic Librarian for the Department of Agriculture from 1922 to at least 1943. On April 25, 1944, she married Charles W. Stetson. Margaret died in 1982 at the age of 90.

John Hedrick Olcott, born October 4, 1900 in Arlington, Virginia, graduated with a degree in civil engineering from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1923. John married Mary McAllister in 1929 and they had a son, John Hedrick Olcott, Jr., in 1940 and a daughter, Mary Olcott Greiner, in 1941. John was drafted into the US Army during World War II and served in Germany from 1943-1945. While John was deployed in Germany, Mary lived with John Jr. and Mary Jr. in Ocean City, NJ. After his return, the family lived in Arlington, Virginia. They moved to Salisbury, NC for a period in the 1950s before returning to Arlington, Virginia for the remainder of their lives. John died in 1977 and Mary in 1983.

## Scope and Content

RG 364 contains materials related to Alice and Harry Olcott's family and measures 1.17 linear feet. Materials date 1879-2002, and the bulk of the material dates 1902-1950. Most of the materials relate to Alice Hedrick Olcott (often referred to as Mama), Alice Griswold Olcott, Margaret Thompson Olcott, and John Hedrick Olcott and his wife, Mary Stewart. References are made throughout all the materials to family members in the wider Olcott family. There are some materials that belong to or refer to people who were unable to be substantially identified or placed in the family tree (see Appendices A-C), particularly the 1879 letter in File 1 between Mary and Louise.

The letters between Alice H. Olcott (Mama), Alice G. Olcott, and Margaret T. Olcott contain the most substantive information on the family, as there are multiple letters throughout a two-year period.

The collection contains a recipe book passed down to Mary Stewart Olcott by her mother, Mary McAllister (née Hanway). It also contains a lock of John H. Olcott Jr.'s hair from when he was 2 1/2 years old.

There is a set of photograph negatives from 1940. Most of the negatives contain an image of a young boy who is likely John Jr. Olcott along with other unidentified family members. The truck in a few of the photos is labeled Conserco Inc., which was a company John Olcott worked for. There are also a few negatives of a gravestone marked Hanway, which was Mary Olcott's mother's maiden name. It is unclear if the unidentified family members are the Olcott family or the McAllister family, though they are likely the McAllister family since the photos were developed for H. S. McAllister (Mary Olcott's father, Hector McAllister).

## Index Terms

## Persons:

Olcott, Alice Hedrick, 1859-1952

Olcott, John Hedrick, 1900-1977

Olcott, Mary Stewart (McAllister), 1906-1983

Stetson, Margaret Thompson (Olcott), 1892-1982

Bentley, Alice Griswold (Olcott), 1890-1988

## Geographical Names:

Arlington (Va.)

Arlington County (Va.)

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged by topic and chronology. Materials were separated into folders by subject and folders were arranged chronologically. The archivist created all folder titles for this collection.

There is one oversized document in this collection, which has been moved to appropriate housing. A separation sheet has been added to mark its original placement. An asterisk (\*) at the end of the folder title denotes the oversize material.

## Contents List

### **File 1: Letter from Mary to Louise, 1879**

Box 1

### **File 2: Mina G. Olcott Exam Papers, ca. 1880\***

Box 1

### **File 3: Checks and Account Credits, 1893, 1902-1904**

Box 1

### **File 4: Miscellaneous Materials, 1902, 1913, n.d.**

Box 1

### **File 5: Materials Related to Amanda E. Hanway's Death, 1908**

Box 1

### **File 6: Mary Hanway's Recipe Book, n.d.**

Box 1

### **File 7: Letters from Mama to Margaret Olcott, 1920-1921**

Box 1

### **File 8: Letters from Alice Olcott to Margaret Olcott, 1920-1922, 1950**

Box 1

### **File 9: Letters to John and Mary Olcott, 1945, 1952, 1957**

Box 1

**File 10: Margaret T. Olcott's Personnel Documents, 1922-1944**

Box 1

**File 11: Margaret T. Olcott's Notebook, 1932/1935**

Box 1

**File 12: Girls' Friendly Society Letters to Margaret T. Olcott, 1930, 1933, 1937**

Box 1

**File 13: Receipts, 1933-34, 1939, 1942-43**

Box 1

**File 14: Photograph Advertisements and Negatives, 1940, 1946, n.d.**

Box 1

**File 15: John Olcott Jr.'s Hair and Birthday Card, 1941**

Box 1

**File 16: Deed for the McAllister property, 1951**

Box 1

**File 17: William Greiner's Cars Owned, 1941-2002**

Box 1