

Stratton, William Avery, Correspondence

William Avery Stratton Correspondence
1864-1940



Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2009.114

Unit Date

1864-1940

Unit Date

1864-1880

Language

The material in the collection is in English.

Abstract

The collection contains correspondence to William Avery Stratton from friends and family. Letters date from as early as the American Civil War (1864) to the year after Stratton's death (1940). For the most part, letters are about social and family news, though some of the early letters contain Civil War and post-bellum news from the South. Letters from friends in Oregon, Colorado, and Nevada also provide details on Indian affairs, railroad growth, and cattle in the West. The collection also contains a large number of wedding and graduation invitations for events in Oxford, New York, where Stratton spent much of his life.

Creator

Currier, Lottie (Charlotte?) Lewis

Creator

Chase, Hattie

Creator

Brown, Alice

Creator

Stratton family (Oxford, New York)

Creator

Robinson, Charles L.

Creator

MacFarland, Ira

Creator

MacFarland, Alice Stratton, b.1864

Creator

Juliand, Sarah Stratton

Creator

Stratton, Tracy Frink, b.1858

Creator

Stratton, Harvey J., b.1850

Creator

Stratton, George, 1823-1910

Creator

Stratton, Edward L., b.1847

Creator

Stratton, William Avery, 1845-1939

Extent

2.4 Cubic Feet 2 boxes

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Source of Acquisition

The William Avery Stratton Correspondence was purchased by Special Collections before 2000.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the William Avery Stratton Correspondence commenced in August 2009 and was completed in September 2009.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], William Avery Stratton Correspondence, Ms2009-114, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

George Stratton (1823-1910) married Mariette Robinson (abt. 1824-1865) in January 1845. They had six children, all born in Oxford, New York: William Avery (1845-1939), Edward L. (b. December 1847), Harvey J. (b. January 1850), Luke A. (1853-1862), Tracy Frink (b. June 1858), and Alice Robinson (b. February 1864). Some time between 1866 and 1870, George married his first wife's cousin, Maria A. Robinson. George and his four sons who survived to adulthood were all involved in dairy farming and lumber work at one time or another. Stratton seems to have worked in both business, probably in an office capacity, after mid-1881.

Although some details of Stratton's life are unknown, a great deal can be found in the letters. He spent much of his life in parts of Chenango County, New York. He never married. He went to the Oxford Academy, which continued to serve (in an expanded form), as the central school district for Oxford. Around 1866, he attended business college in Poughkeepsie, New York.

In 1870 and early 1871, Stratton seems to have been looking for work. After a brief trip to visit family and friends in Mississippi and Georgia in the spring of 1871, he settled in Washington, DC, having taken a clerk position with the Office of Internal Revenue, Treasury Department. In 1877, he left the Treasury Department and traveled in California and Oregon. Letters from his trip, as well as after, suggest he may be looking to find work there. He was back in Oxford the next year, however. By the spring of 1879, Stratton was working for Lord and Taylor in New York City. In 1881, he moved to Othello, Mississippi. Some time after May 1881, he returned again to Chenango County. It is unclear if he remained with the family business(es) or found other work. He died in 1939. His sister, Alice, was his only sibling still alive at that time.

Scope and Content

The collection contains correspondence to William Avery Stratton from friends and family. Letters date from as early as the American Civil War (1864) to the year after Stratton's death (1940). For the most part, letters are about social and family news, though some of the early letters contain Civil War and post-bellum news from the South. Letters from friends in Oregon, Colorado, and Nevada also provide details on Indian affairs, railroad growth, and cattle in the West. The collection also contains a large number of wedding and graduation invitations for events in Oxford, New York, where Stratton spent much of his life.

A significant portion of the family correspondence shares news from places around the country. There is also an emphasis on family business (the selling of butter from the farm, land, and stock dividends, for example) and local politics. Stratton's extended family lived throughout central and eastern New York, as well as in other parts of the country, and appear often throughout the correspondence both as writers and topics. In addition to Strattons, other connected families include the Chases, the Robinsons, the Ten Brocks (Ten Broecks) and the Juliands. A list of major correspondents by decade is provided under "Series I: Correspondence" below.

Note: There is very little correspondence for the period of June 1882 through November 1890, and none for the period of 1920 to 1934.

In addition to letters, the collection also contains a series of wedding and graduation invitations. During the second half of his life, while living predominantly in Oxford, New York, Stratton appears to have been a popular invitee. Many of the graduation invitations are for his old school, the Oxford Academy. Other materials include miscellaneous photographs and business papers.

Keywords

Correspondence
Local/Regional History and Appalachian South
Civil War
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
Stratton family (Oxford, New York)

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged in three series--Series I: Correspondence, 1864-1940, Series II: Invitations, 1874-1935, and Series III: Ephemera.

Series I: Correspondence, 1864-1940, contains more than 75 years of personal and business letters written

to, and in a few cases, by, Stratton. A majority of the letters are from immediate and extended family. The remainder are from friends and business associates. In addition to his own jobs over the years, Stratton appears to have facilitated business transactions for his family's dairy.

Hattie Chase (Stratton's cousin), wrote Stratton a number of letters from Georgia concerning treatment and perceptions of African-Americans in the south after the American Civil War. Her letters continue into the early 1870s. After 1871, Stratton's brother, Edward, also writes about African-Americans, when he moved to Bolton, Mississippi, for a job with Robinson & Withers, later Robinson & Williams, then C. L. Robinson & Co. Charles L. Robinson was probably a relation through William and Edward's mother and step-mother.

Starting in 1878, Stratton received letters from a cousin, Eli Ten Brock, and a number of other friends living out west. These letters contain discussion of troubles with Indians, the growth of the railroad, and cattle driving in Oregon, Colorado, Nevada, and Texas. These were not the only colorful characters with whom he corresponded. After an unknown attack of some kind while living in Mississippi, a friend advised him that "if I had been in your place I would have shot a hole in him big enough to see what he had for last meal." His friend then recommends he buy a pistol and "shoot the H--l out of the first man that attempts to molest [him]." Later letters from his sister and brother-in-law, Alice and Ira MacFarland, relate stories of gold mining and ranching in Nevada.

This series is arranged chronologically.

Series II: Invitations, 1874-1935, includes invitations to events in and around Oxford, New York, and other locations. It contains two subseries: Subseries I: Weddings and Anniversaries, 1874-1935, and Subseries II: Graduations and Reunions, 1890-1900. Subseries I includes weddings and anniversary party invitations and announcements. Many of these have place cards attached. Subseries II contains invitations to graduation and reunion events at the Oxford Academy, some of which have attached calling cards.

This series is arranged chronologically within each subseries.

Description of Subordinate Components

Series I: Correspondence

Unit Date 1864-1940

Scope Note

- Major Correspondents, 1864-1869: Alice Brown, Hattie Chase, M.H. Hall, Wallace Mott, Anna (Annie), Julia, and Ida Nichols, George Stratton, Sarah Stratton (later Juliand), and Minnie Tremain.
- Major Correspondents, 1870-1879: Hattie Chase, Lottie Lewis (later Currier), Edward L. Stratton, Harvey J. Stratton, George Stratton, and Maria A. Stratton.
- Major Correspondents, 1880-1889: Edward L. Stratton, and Tracy F. Stratton.
- Major Correspondents, 1890-1899: George Juliand, II, Ira MacFarland, and Jennie Randall.
- Major Correspondents, 1900-1909: None.
- Major Correspondents, 1910-1919: Edward L. Stratton.
- Major Correspondents, 1920-1934: No correspondence from this period.
- Major Correspondents, 1935-1940: Alice Stratton MacFarland.

Unit Date 1864

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Unit Date 1865

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Unit Date January-February 1866

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Unit Date March-December 1866

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Unit Date 1867

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Unit Date January-July 1868
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 6 (folder)
Unit Date August-December 1868
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 7 (folder)
Unit Date 1869
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 8 (folder)
Unit Date 1870
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 9 (folder)
Unit Date 1871
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 10 (folder)
Unit Date 1872
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 11 (folder)
Unit Date 1873
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 12 (folder)
Unit Date 1874
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 13 (folder)
Unit Date 1875
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 14 (folder)
Unit Date 1876
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 15 (folder)
Unit Date 1877
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 16 (folder)
Unit Date 1878
box-folder 1 (box)
Container 17 (folder)
Unit Date 1879
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Container 18 (folder)
Unit Date 1880
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Container 19 (folder)
Unit Date 1881-1889
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Container 20 (folder)
Unit Date 1890-1893
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Container 1 (folder)
Unit Date 1894-1899
box-folder 2 (box)
Container 2 (folder)

Unit Date 1900-1909

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Unit Date 1910-1919

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Unit Date 1935-1940

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Correspondence

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Series II: Invitations

Unit Date 1874-1935

Subseries A: Weddings and Anniversaries

Unit Date 1874-1935

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 7-9 (folder)

Subseries B: Graduations and Reunions

Unit Date 1890-1900

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Series III: Ephemera and Photographs

Unit Date n.d.

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 11-12 (folder)