

Jane Isabella Watt White papers

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1848-1878, 2017

Title Statement

Jane Isabella Watt White papersJane Isabella Watt White papers WLU.Coll.0265

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

WLU.Coll.0265

Unit ID

/repositories/5/resources/180

Unit Date

1848-1878, 2017

Language

English

Creator

White, Jane Isabella Watt

source

Quin, Paul, Mrs.

Extent

0.25 Linear Feet one box

Repository

Washington and Lee University, University Library Special Collections and Archives

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mrs. Paul Quin.

Preferred Citation

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Biographical Note

Jane Isabella Watt White was born in Richmond, Va. on October 8, 1803 to George and Margaret Watt. She was the wife of Lexington Presbyterian minister, Rev. William Spotswood White (1800-1873), minister of the Lexington Presbyterian Church from 1848-1867. They had seven children who lived to adulthood: James Jones "Old Zeus" White (faculty member at Washington and Lee University), Rev. George William White, Eliza Westmore White Wade, Rev. Henry Martyn White, Harriet Newell White McCrum, Captain Hugh Augustus White (who died at Manassas), and Thomas Spotswood White. Jane and William also had a son, John Spotswood White, who died in infancy. She was a devout Christian as evidenced by her writings. Jane died on October 3, 1878.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains a scrapbook, diary, and correspondence belonging to Jane Isabella Watt White.

The scrapbook was started in 1855 and primarily contains newspaper clippings, including obituaries for relatives such as her parents (George and Margaret Watt), Jane Watt, Sarah Maria Massie (sister), and Harriet McCrum (daughter) as well as other individuals including Clement P. McKennie. Other clippings are published poems, prayers, and religious meditations. Of particular note are several handwritten items. One is a handwritten poem written "To the Memory of my Sister Eliza" (Eliza Westmore). Another is "For a little girl's sampler" copied by hand by Jane. The last item is labeled "Extracts from 'Aunt's Scrapbook'" (Mrs. D. J. Jones) written out by someone with the initials E. J. G. of Williamsburg, Va. Three letters are also tipped into the scrapbook. The first letter is dated April 6, 1841 and was written to White by James Jones of Mountain Hall in Nottoway County, Virginia. Jones was a physician and statesman who goes into detail about the "febrile attacks" (seizures) his wife (Catherine) recently experienced and describes at length her condition. He wrote, "I believe I have the best medical aid our part of the Country affords on which I look for Divine Blessing with some comfort." The second letter is dated May 12, 1848 and written to Rev. William and Jane White by Catherine Jones of Mountain Hall who describes the last days of her husband, James Jones, before his passing in April. She thanks Rev. White for remembering her husband during his sermon. She ends the letter by giving information about her husband's early life. The final letter is dated August 26, 1848 and written to Rev. William White by Catherine Jones of Mountain Hall. It acknowledges his move from Charlottesville for a new job [as minister of Lexington Presbyterian Church]. She wrote, "I fear that the mountains will be a barrier" between his family and her. She mentions James (her son) and describes him as a "link (among others) in the chain of my comforts that has been broken off."

The collection also includes a few letters. One was written in March 1848 by Jane to her father, George Watt, with a letter written by William White to him on the back of Jane's. Jane shares that her oldest son (James) has accepted Christ into this life a year after his brother George. She goes into detail describing the kind of person James is. William also shares his excitement over seeing his sons sitting at the "table of the Lord." Another letter was written to Jane by her son, Hugh, while he was studying at the Union Theological Seminary in April 1861. The letter outlines his thoughts about the war founded in his religious beliefs. He informs his mother that he is mustering in the Hampden-Sydney company although he hasn't joined it, saying he prefers to join a company at Washington College. There are two letters written by Jane to her son Tommie. One was written at the start of his military service during the Civil War. The first letter acknowledges that he is her youngest child and she says, "O! how it rends my heart to give you up, especially as you are not a Christian." The second letter was written after the death of his brother Hugh in 1862. Both letters are undated. Both letters plead with him to come to Christ. The last letter in the collection was written by Margaret Junkin Preston to Jane on September 1862 offering her condolences on the loss of son Hugh.

Jane's diary spans from 1855-1875 though is not comprehensive. As evidenced by her writing, she was a devout Christian. The subjects of her diary include religion, her children, their spouses, her grandchildren, the Civil War (including her thoughts about the North, her sons, Liberty Hall Volunteers), illness (such as typhoid fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria), and death (family and friends). Of particular note is her inclusion of the death of an enslaved boy named John Daniel in her diary. She mentions his death in her July 29, 1856 entry writing, "The death of a little servant boy saddened us much. His illness was long, and severe, but his death was comforting." Jane wrote out the conversation she had with John Daniel as he was on his death bed, which was rooted in religion. She documented that he suffered from fever, a violent pain in his head, and partial paralysis. He was eleven years old.

Keywords

Personal Narratives

Diaries

Scrapbooks
Correspondence
Sick children
Sick--United States
Death
Enslaved persons
Religion
Quin, Paul, Mrs.
White, Hugh Augustus
White, William S. (William Spotswood)

Description of Subordinate Components

Scrapbook

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/31485

Unit Date 1855-1878

Mixed Materials [35101206266426] 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Letter to George Watt from Jane Isabella White

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/35586

Unit Date 1848 March 9

Mixed Materials [35101206266426] 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Additional Information

Rev. William S. White wrote a letter to his father-in-law on the back of his wife's letter to her father.

Letter to Jane Isabelle White from Hugh White

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/35587

Unit Date 1861 April 25

Mixed Materials [35101206266426] 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Letters from Jane Isabella White to Thomas Spottswood White

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/35588

Unit Date undated

Mixed Materials [35101206266426] 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Letter to Mrs. White from Margaret Junkin Preston

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/35585

Unit Date 1862 September 6

Mixed Materials [35101206266426] 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Additional Information

includes transcription

Diary

Unit ID /repositories/5/archival_objects/35589

Unit Date 1855-1856 May

Mixed Materials [35101206266426] 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Diary**Unit ID** /repositories/5/archival_objects/35614**Unit Date** 1856 July 20-29**Mixed Materials [35101206266426]** 1 (box)**Container** 7 (folder)**Additional Information**

includes her conversation with John Daniel on his death bed

Diary**Unit ID** /repositories/5/archival_objects/35615**Unit Date** 1857 October-1861 September 6**Mixed Materials [35101206266426]** 1 (box)**Container** 8 (folder)**Diary****Unit ID** /repositories/5/archival_objects/35616**Unit Date** 1861 October-1865, circa 1866**Mixed Materials [35101206266426]** 1 (box)**Container** 9 (folder)**Diary****Unit ID** /repositories/5/archival_objects/35618**Unit Date** 1873 November-1875**Mixed Materials [35101206266426]** 1 (box)**Container** 10 (folder)**Transcription of diary****Unit ID** /repositories/5/archival_objects/35590**Unit Date** 2017**Mixed Materials [35101206266426]** 1 (box)**Container** 11 (folder)