Guide to the Piatt Family Papers

MS 1038

compiled by Susan Grigg

March 1980

New Haven, Connecticut
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Paging Instructions

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Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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New Haven, CT 06520
Web: http://web.library.yale.edu/mssa
Email: mssa.assist@yale.edu
Phone: (203) 432-1735
Fax: (203) 432-7441

CALL NUMBER: MS 1038

CREATOR: Piatt family.

TITLE: Piatt Family Papers

DATES: 1834-1909

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1 linear foot

LANGUAGE(S): The materials are in English.

SUMMARY: Correspondence, literary notes, clippings, photographs, and an album of poems and drawings on Edinburgh compiled (1898-1899) by Cecil Piatt. The correspondence consists mainly of letters to John Bear Piatt from family members on the frontier in Montana, Dakota territory, and Kansas. There are also letters from his son, John James Piatt, who served as the United States Consul in Cork, Ireland, from 1882-1893, and from Sarah Morgan Bryan Piatt, noted nineteenth century poet and author.

FINDING AID LINK: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, use the following address: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1038.

Administrative Information

Provenance

In part gift of Howard S. Mott, 1954.
Biographical Sketch

John James Piatt, the son of John Bear Piatt, was born in Milton, Indiana, on March 1, 1835. John J. Piatt was educated at public schools continuously until he was fourteen and intermittently afterwards. He attended Ohio State University and Kenyon College at times. Moving with his family to Illinois, Piatt submitted one of his poems to a journal and it was published. Soon after, he published a volume entitled, Poems of Two Friends, with William D. Howells. Between 1861 and 1867, he was clerk for the U.S. treasury department. In 1871, he became librarian for the U.S. House of Representatives and in 1882, U.S. consul to Cork, Ireland, where he stayed for a decade. Throughout his life, he published poetry in journals and books. He was married to Sarah Morgan Bryan, also a poet, on June 18, 1861.

Sarah Morgan Bryan was born on August 11, 1836, in Lexington, Kentucky to Talbot Nelson Bryan and Mary Spiers. She was educated at the Henry Female College in New Castle, Kentucky. From an early age she loved English poetry, and in her youth she began to write verses herself under the influence of those of Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Samuel Coleridge, and Percy Shelley. Her first published poem appeared in the Galveston (Texas) News. A short time later her poems began appearing regularly in the Louisville (Kentucky) Journal and then in the New York Ledger. Bryan was widely known as a poet by the time of her marriage in 1861 to John L. Piatt, a journalist, poet, and coauthor with William Dean Howells of Poems of Two Friends (1860). Sarah Piatt produced several volumes of poetry over the next 20 years, including The Nests at Washington and Other Poems (1864; with her husband), A Woman’s Poems (1871), A Voyage to the Fortunate Isles and Other Poems (1874), and Dramatic Persons and Moods (1880).

The couple had at least four children, including Cecil Piatt, a banker who was also appointed to be U.S. consul to Cork. John J. Piatt died February 16, 1917.

Description of the Papers

The Piatt Family Papers consist mainly of letters to John Bear Piatt and other members of his household from his children and other relations. The letters of John James Piatt are mainly from Ireland, 1887-1893, including some addressed to a political associate, Reuben Howard Warren. The other family members wrote from various places in the Midwest and West-especially Ohio, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nevada, and the Dakota territory. Of particular note are letters of Sarah Morgan Bryan Piatt (1836-1919), an important nineteenth-century poet who published some 450 poems across fifteen volumes and in leading periodicals of the day. Besides the letters there are a few miscellaneous items: literary notes (apparently excerpts of published book reviews), clippings, photographs (including one of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and one of his letter to J. J. Piatt); engravings of Kenyon College; and an album made by Cecil Piatt in Edinburgh, 1898-1899.
# Collection Contents

## Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1834-1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1884-1909, no date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cecil Piatt: album</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literary notes and clippings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Photographs and engravings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Access Terms

Piatt, John James, 1835-1917
Piatt, Sarah M. B. (Sarah Morgan Bryan), 1836-1919