

# Guide to the William Henry Bennett Family Papers

MS 912



compiled by Susan Grigg

September 1979

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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P.O. Box 208240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 912

**CREATOR:** Bennett, William Henry, 1843-1908

**TITLE:** William Henry Bennett family papers

**DATES:** 1857-1901

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.25 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Mainly family correspondence between William H. Bennett, his wife, and father containing news of Hampton, Conn., student life at Yale College (ca. 1860s), and family news from the Bennetts in the Mid-West. There are also photographs and essays on the New York Produce Exchange, as well as photographs of tea cultivation in India and China and of a survey party at the Nicaragua canal.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0912>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0912>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased in 1961.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Preferred Citation

William Henry Bennett Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

William Henry Bennett, son of Samuel Fuller and Harriet (Spaulding) Bennett, was born June 28, 1843, at Scotland, Conn., and died at Minneapolis, Minn., October 14, 1908.

About 1845 his father moved from Scotland to Hampton, Conn., and lived at the homestead and farm bought by his ancestor, William Bennett, in 1740, and which has been continuously in the family name to the present. His boyhood was spent on this farm, working on the farm in the summer and attending school in the winter. He prepared for college at Phillips Academy, Exeter, N.H. In college he was a member of Linonia, Gamma Nu, Alpha Delta Phi, and Phi Beta Kappa and was awarded the third prize in Linonia Senior Debate. After graduation he taught one year at Easton, Conn., then studied in the Albany (N.Y.) Law School, graduating from there in May, 1868, and soon afterward began practicing at Sterling, Whiteside County, Ill., in the firm of Sackett & Bennett. About 1874 Mr. Sackett retired from the firm, which then became Bennett & Green.

While residing in Sterling, he was twice Mayor, first in 1873 and again in 1882, also President of the Library Board, and a school trustee for several years. He was often urged to be a candidate for political office and also to accept a judgeship, but he declined, preferring to devote himself to the practice of the law.

In December, 1888, he moved to Minneapolis, Minn., where in 1890 he entered the firm of Koon, Whelan & Bennett, and continued in that partnership until January 1, 1908, when he withdrew to become general counsel of the Minneapolis Street Railway Company.

He was an able and successful lawyer and especially noted for his skill in conducting his cases in court and also for fairness and courtesy to his opponents. He was the trial lawyer of his firm, having a large practice in the courts. Mr. Bennett, in addition to his pursuit of the law, for twenty years and more had conducted an agency for making investment in farm mortgages, which had grown to be a large and successful business. He had employed his two daughters, Kate and Jane, as his assistants, and after his death they continued the business and looked after the outstanding loans. He owned two ranches of 2,000 acres each in South Dakota, near the town of Hecla.

The cause of his death was the hardening of the valves of the heart. His burial was in Hampton, Conn.

He married at Elizabeth, Ill., January 1, 1873, Miss Frances Green, who died in November following.

Child: Frances Louise, born November 2, 1873.

October 17, 1876, he married Kate Prescott, daughter of George A. and Jane (Prescott) Wright of Bridgeport, Conn.

Children: Kate Townsend, born at Sterling, Ill., January 2, 1878. Married September 21, 1910, to Louis Harvey Joss, son of Rev. A. A. Joss (a graduate of Princeton) and Mary Putnam Powell.

Jane Prescott, born at Sterling, Ill., July 7, 1881. Married May 11, 1910 to Harold Foster Marston, a graduate of the University of Minnesota.

Frances Louise Bennett graduated at the University of Minnesota, 1896; Kate Townsend Bennett graduated at the University of Minnesota, 1899, and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa; Jane Prescott Bennett took a special course at the University of Minnesota and graduated 1894.

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## Scope and Contents

Mainly family correspondence between William H. Bennett, his wife, and father containing news of Hampton, Conn., student life at Yale College (ca. 1860s), and family news from the Bennetts in the Mid-West. There are also photographs and essays on the New York Produce Exchange, as well as photographs of tea cultivation in India and China and of a survey party at the Nicaragua canal.

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## Collection Contents

b.1	Letters to William H. Bennett from his father, Samuel F. Bennett, and from friends	1857-1867
b.1	Letters to Samuel F. Bennett from William H. Bennett and his second wife, Katherine Prescott (Wright) Bennett	1881-1890
b.1	Compositions by William H. Bennett and by his students	1867
b.1	Essays, mainly on the New York Produce Exchange during World War I, apparently by Louise E. Dew	undated
b.1	Photographs of the New York Produce Exchange, tea cultivation and processing in India and China, and a 1900-1901 transit party of the Nicaragua canal survey	undated

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Education  
Families  
Lawyers

### **Geographic Names**

Connecticut  
Hampton (Conn.)  
Middle West

### **Names**

Bennett, Samuel F.  
Bennett, William Henry, 1843-1908  
Read, Henry B.  
Sackett, Darius Parmalee, 1842-1912

### **Families**

Bennett family

### **Corporate Bodies**

New York Produce Exchange  
Yale College (1718-1887). Class of 1866  
Yale University -- Students