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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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: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0912

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 http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0912.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:
b. box

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Purchased in 1961.
Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creator(s) of this collection are in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use. Copyright status for other collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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

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.

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.
| 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