

Guide to the Piatt Family Papers

MS 1038



compiled by Susan Grigg

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Collection Overview | 3 |
| Requesting Instructions | 3 |
| Administrative Information | 3 |
| Immediate Source of Acquisition | 3 |
| Conditions Governing Access | 4 |
| Conditions Governing Use | 4 |
| Preferred Citation | 4 |
| Biographical / Historical | 4 |
| Scope and Contents | 4 |
| Collection Contents | 5 |
| Selected Search Terms | 6 |

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1038

CREATOR: Piatt family

TITLE: Piatt Family Papers

DATES: 1834-1909

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1 linear foot

LANGUAGE: 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.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1038>

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.1038>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to 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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

In part gift of Howard S. Mott, 1954.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown, though much of the material in this collection is likely in the public domain. 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

Piatt Family Papers (MS 1038). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

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.

Scope and Contents

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

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|-----|--|-----------------------|
| b.1 | Correspondence | 1834-1883 |
| b.2 | Correspondence | 1884-1909, undated |
| b.2 | Cecil Piatt: album | |
| b.2 | Literary notes and clippings | |
| b.2 | Photographs and engravings | |

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

Americans -- Ireland
Diplomats
Families
Frontier and pioneer life

Geographic Names

Ireland
Kansas -- Social life and customs
Middle West
Montana -- Social life and customs
United States -- Foreign relations
West (U.S.)

Genres / Formats

Albums (Books)
Drawings (visual works)
Poetry

Names

Piatt, Benjamin
Piatt, Cecil, 1878-1949
Piatt, Charles C.
Piatt, John Bear, b. 1803
Piatt, John James, 1835-1917
Piatt, Sarah M. B. (Sarah Morgan Bryan),
1836-1919

Families

Pyatte family