

Constance Fenimore Woolson letter S213

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

July 31, 2015

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Books and Manuscripts
140 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204
317-232-3671

Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical Note</u>	4
<u>Biographical Note</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents</u>	5
<u>Arrangement</u>	5
<u>Administrative Information</u>	6
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	6

Summary Information

Repository	Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Woolson, Constance Fenimore, 1840-1894
Title	Constance Fenimore Woolson letter
Date	1890
Extent	0.01 Cubic feet 1 folder
Language	English
Text [Folder]	S213

Preferred Citation

Constance Fenimore Woolson letter, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library

Biographical Note

Constance Fenimore Woolson was born March 5, 1840 in Claremont, New Hampshire to Charles Jarvis and Hannah Cooper (Pomeroy) Woolson. Very soon after, her family moved to Cleveland, Ohio following the deaths of three of Woolson's sisters from scarlet fever. During the 1850s, Woolson attended Cleveland Female Seminary. After the death of her father in 1869, Woolson, her mother, and one of her sisters moved to St. Augustine, Florida. Soon thereafter, she began publishing essays, poems, and short stories in magazines, before publishing a children's book, *The Old Stone House* (1873), and two collections of short stories (1875; 1880). Following the death of her mother in 1879, Woolson moved to Europe, mainly living in England, and Florence and Venice, Italy, while traveling extensively until her death on January 24, 1894.

During her period abroad, she wrote several novels and travel narratives based on her experiences and observations. She unsparingly critiqued life in the Great Lakes frontier, New York City, the Reconstruction South, Europe, and even Cairo, touching on racial relations, land and the environment, industrialization, and American consumption of cultures and places. She was friends with some of the era's most eminent male writers, including Henry James, John Hay, and Edmund Clarence Stedman, despite growing increasingly disillusioned about the attitude toward women writers and artists.

Sources:

Items in the collection.

Brehm, Victoria and Anne Boyd Rioux. "Constance Fenimore Woolson's Literary Career." Constance Fenimore Woolson Society. Accessed July 31, 2015. <https://constancefenimorewoolson.wordpress.com/about/an-introduction/>.

Dean, Sharon L. "Constance Fenimore Woolson." *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, 5th ed. Cengage Learning [website]. Accessed July 31, 2015. http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/late_nineteenth/woolson_co.html.

Moore, Rayburn S. *Constance Fenimore Woolson*, vol. 34. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1963), 18-40.

Biographical Note

Catharine Merrill was born in 1824 in Corydon, Indiana, to Samuel Merrill (1792-1855), a prominent politician, banker and book publisher, and Lydia Jane (Anderson) Merrill. One of ten children, she was educated at schools in Indianapolis and Bloomington, Indiana. Just before the Civil War, Merrill studied literature in Germany before returning to dedicate her life to teaching. She first taught at the Cleveland Female Seminary in Ohio as well as in Crawfordsville, Indiana. During the Civil War, she served as a

nurse in Kentucky while her brother, Colonel Samuel Merrill (1831-1924), fought with the 70th Indiana Regiment. In 1867, she was appointed as the Demia Butler Professor of English at North Western Christian University (now Butler University), which was the first time an endowed chair at an American university was bestowed upon a female professor. Merrill remained in that post until her retirement in 1883.

Following the end of the war, she was asked to write a history of Indiana's Civil War soldiers by Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton. The two-volume work entitled *The Soldier of Indiana in the War for the Union* (1866, 1869) was published anonymously. She also wrote *The Man Shakespeare and Other Essays* (1902). Merrill met John Muir during his time in Indianapolis, Indiana during 1866-1867 and they remained friends until her death in 1900.

Sources:

Items in the collection.

Samuel Merrill collection, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library.

Sierra Club. "Catharine Merrill." The John Muir Exhibit. Accessed July 31, 2015. http://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/people/catharine_merrill.aspx.

"Miss Merrill Dead." *The School Journal* 61 (June 9, 1900): 660. Accessed July 31, 2015. <http://books.google.com>.

Scope and Contents

This collection includes a letter from Constance Fenimore Woolson in Cairo, Egypt to Catharine Merrill in Indianapolis, Indiana on March 12, 1890 regarding her fondness for Merrill and their time together at Cleveland Female Seminary, her travels in Europe, the Middle East, and Egypt, her former schoolmates in Indianapolis, and her writing.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged chronologically.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Rare Books and Manuscripts

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Custodial History

This collection was received by Rare Books and Manuscripts as a donation.

Accruals

No further additions are expected.

Processing Information

Collection processing completed 2015/07/31 by Brittany Kropf. EAD finding aid created 2015/07/31 by Brittany Kropf.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Indianapolis (Ind.)

Personal Name(s)

- Merrill, Catharine, 1824-1900

Subject(s)

- Authors--American--Indiana--19th century
- Butler University
- Correspondence
- Europe--Description and travel
- Teachers
- Women authors