

The Stetson-Thew Family Papers

Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
Plattsburgh State University College
Plattsburgh, N. Y. 12901

By
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Introduction

The Stetson/Thew Papers is a small collection of correspondence and ephemera relating to two families living in Clinton County in the second half of the nineteenth century. Contained in one full Hollinger box, the papers fill fourteen folders, eleven of correspondence (205 items) and three of ephemera (31 items). Primarily relating personal information and local gossip, these papers present a description of local life for these two families and their friends and relatives.

The son of one of the original settlers in the Peru area, Garrett Thew (1808-1894) was a farmer in Black Brook in 1850. Some time between 1850 and 1860 he moved, with his wife, Mary (1812-1901) and his family to Rand Hill, where they remained. Listed in the census as residing in Beekmantown, their mail is addressed to West Plattsburgh. Garrett and Mary had five children: Frederick (1834-1857), Deborah (b. 1836), Helen (1842-1903), Anna (b. 1845), and Ira (b. 1849). Deborah (Deby) married and left home. Helen married Jacob (Jake) Bedell (1837-1903) and in 1883 moved to Concord, New Hampshire. Mr. Bedell appears to have been a photographer. In 1895 or 1896 they moved to Penacook, New Hampshire and later to Kittery, Maine, where Helen died in 1903. Anna never married but worked as a schoolteacher in Beacon Falls, Connecticut. She later worked in the family dairy.

Ira, a farmer, married Mary Catherine (Kate) Stetson in January 1883 and they set up housekeeping on Rand Hill later that year. Kate (1847-1901) and her brother, Charles (1849-1891), seem to be the children of George W. Stetson by a first wife. They were raised by uncles-and aunts in Clinton County, including Benjamin and Marietta Stetson and Thomas and Mary Stetson, all of Champlain. Their father, a preacher, remarried and lived in Ohio with his second family. Charles married Jennie and had a daughter, Ethel. Kate and Ira had one daughter, Marion Kate Thew, born in 1883. The birth of a son, Tommy, is mentioned in a letter from Mary Stetson to Kate Thew on 23 Sept. 1898, but it is not known if this baby lived.

The correspondence centers around these top families, the Thews and the Stetsons and their friends and relatives. It is almost entirely concerned with personal, family, and local information and there are a number of correspondents whose identities are uncertain. Major correspondents are Anna Thew, Helen Bedell, Kate (Stetson) Thew, and Kate's aunt, Mary Stetson.

Correspondence is arranged chronologically from 1860 to 1960. Following these nine folders is a folder of undated correspondence and another of incomplete letters, also undated.

Folder 9 of the correspondence contains letters concerning Marion K. Thew, the daughter of Ira and Kate Thew. She taught school in Morrisonville and for forty-two years, in Little Falls, New York. Folder 12 contains material, primarily school contracts, relating to Miss Thew.

A small leather purse, with a note saying that it was a gift to Annie from Garrett Thew, is in folder 14. The purse has a label which says "Marion K. Thew, Morrisonville, Clinton County, New York." Folder 13, labeled Miscellaneous, contains a variety of items including bills and receipts, a Larken family birth, death and marriage chart, Kate Stetson's teaching license, some newspaper clippings, random notes, and photographs.

Information supplied in brackets on the documents is derived from sources other than the individual document, such as an envelope.

BACKGROUND SOURCES IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

MfC18 Harkness, Joseph Warren, 1848-1937.

Historical department: early settlers of Bullock Hill:

Gilbert and Garrett Thew./by J. W. Harkness. PlattsburghRepublican 27 April 1889: 1.

CONTENTS OF THE STETSON/THEW PAPERS

The Stetson/Thew Papers are housed in one full Hollinger box, which contains 14 folders of correspondence and ephemera.

BOX 1 CORRESPONDENCE

FOLDER ITEMS

1 1860 - 1868 21

2 1869 - 1870 16

3 1873 - 1875 14

4 1852 25

5 1853 26

6 1854 - 1891 21

7 1892 - 1899 20

8 1902 - 1925 13

9 1928 - 1960 7

10 UNDATED 24

11 INCOMPLETE 18

Total: 205

EPHEMERA

12 MARION K. THEW 8

13 MISCELLANEOUS 22

14 LEATHER PURSE 1

Total: 31

STETSON/THEW PAPERS

TOTAL NO. OF ITEMS: 236