Guide to the Hudson Family Papers

95.3

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

By:
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Revised by Debra Kimok
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Introduction

George Henry Hudson was one of the first professors to teach at the Plattsburgh Normal School. Along with his younger brother, Charles F. Hudson, he was a talented musician and played the viola, violin, piano and organ. He was also a prolific amateur photographer and explored stereoscopic photography. But his true passion was for the natural sciences, particularly in the fields of botany and paleontology. He was the first in the world to publish an academic article on fossils.

Hudson was born on October 1, 1855 in North Bangor, New York, to Elizabeth Blake and Rev. Henry James Hudson. His mother was an anti-slavery advocate and kindergarten teacher from Boston. His father was a Unitarian minister. His parents encouraged both him and Charles to explore music and the natural world.

In 1880, the Hudson brothers became business partners and opened a music store. George Hudson eventually attended the Boston Conservatory of Music for two years and received a teaching certificate from the State Normal School of Potsdam. Meanwhile, Charles Hudson was working on establishing a State Normal School in Plattsburgh and in 1888 he petitioned the state legislature to select Plattsburgh as the site for a new school.

Thanks in part to his brother’s efforts, George Hudson became the professor of natural science at Plattsburgh and received an annual salary of $1,500. Throughout his career, Hudson would teach botany, biology, geology, paleontology and zoology to hundreds of students until his retirement in 1926.

Hudson married Eleanor P. Mead on December 8, 1883. They had a son, Erastus Mead Hudson, and a daughter whose married name was Mrs. Charles Heartwell Bonesteel.

At the time of his death on March 19, 1936, Hudson had published over 40 books and pamphlets including: “The Geology of Valcour Island,” “Some Structural Features of a Fossil Embryo Crinoid,” and “The Organic Field of Nature Study.” He had collected thousands of
specimens of insects, shells, plants, and fossils (though much of this was destroyed when the Plattsburgh Normal School burned to the ground in 1929), and his private library housed 6,000 volumes. He is noted for discovering and naming many new fossils in the Adirondack region. In recognition of his teaching merit, he received an Honorary Doctor of Pedagogy Degree from Albany State Teachers College in 1932.

Charles Frederick Hudson, while being partially responsible for bringing a State Normal School to Plattsburgh, was just as influential in cultivating interest in music in Plattsburgh. He and George founded the Hudson School of Music on 84 Court St.— their childhood home. Charles also founded the Plattsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 1911, which he conducted until May 6, 1935, when failing health forced him to step down at age 78.

He helped initiate a week-long annual musical festival for local school children at the Normal School. In addition, he was a music teacher at Chazy High School and Plattsburgh High School, and a choir director at St. John’s Church in Plattsburgh.

Charles Hudson had one son, Frederick H. Hudson, and three daughters, Coranell Hudson, Edna Falconer, and Lucy Agnes Hudson, all of whom helped to run the Hudson School of Music.

Lucy Hudson was the most musically talented of the four, particularly at playing the violin. She studied under renowned violinist Dora Becker for three years and those who knew her claimed that she had sufficient talent to be a nationally recognized violinist.

Lucy succeeded her father as conductor of the Plattsburgh Symphony Orchestra. She was also the director of both the junior and senior choirs at Trinity Episcopal Church and she taught piano and violin. The Plattsburgh Community Concert Association elected her as its first Vice President.

Background Sources in Special Collections


The Hudson Family Papers houses flyers, pamphlets, publications, correspondence, and photographs documenting the musical performances and events organized by Charles and George Hudson and works by Charles Hudson on paleontology, geology and teaching.

BOX 1

Series 1- Family Materials

1/1: Hudson, John R.
1/2: Hudson, Henry J.
1/3: Hudson, George H.—Correspondence
   Item 1 To: George H. Hudson
            From: Charles H. Bonesteel, III
            West Point Graduation Announcement, June 11, 1931

   Item 2  To: George H. Hudson
            From: Henry (nephew)
            8/27/1930

   Item 3  To: Professor George H. Hudson
            From: Lillian I. Flynn (Mrs. Herbert J. Flynn), Lake Kushagua, N.Y.
            9/11/1930
            Asking whether a friend may purchase some of Hudson’s irises

   Item 4  To: George H. Hudson
            From: Ernest
            1/11/1931

   Item 5  To: George H. Hudson
            From: Henry (nephew)
            5/8/1931

   Item 6  To: George H. Hudson
            From: Bruz
            Telegram, 6/11/1931

   Item 7  To: George H. Hudson
            From: Millard Hudson (genealogy)
            4/21/1931

   Item 8  To: George H. Hudson
            From: Elsie Gibson Whitney
            9/15/1931

   Item 9  To: Katherine Hudson
            From: George H. Hudson (uncle)
            9/30/1933
1/4: Mead, Julia
1/5: Hudson, Charles F.--Letter and Receipt
   Item 1  To: Charles F. Hudson
           From: Lewis S. Brown (portrait)
           1/18/1932
   Item 2  1885 receipt of goods “Bought of L. D. Larkin & Son Fresh and Salt
          Meats, Fish, Poultry, Vegetables, Fruits, Oysters, Canned
          Goods &C”

1/6: Hudson, Charles F.--Heart’s Delight Farm Christmas Cards

1/7: Genealogical Information
   Item 1:  Edward Hilton; Thomas Purchis; George Fox; William, Sarah, and Nathaniel
           Meade; Zachary, Agnes, and John Bicknell; Richard Rockett;
           Rev. [Jouble]? Hull; Mary Dyer

   Item 2:  Mirriam Bachelder; Robert Moulton; Robert Moulton, Jr.; Abigail [Goode]?;
           Mirriam, Freeborn, and Benjamin Balch; ? Mallis; Elizabeth Fairfield;
           Skipper, Elizabeth, Sarah, Abigail, Tabitha, Rev. William, and
           Mary Balch; Rebecca Stone

1/8: Correspondence - Written in French
1/9: Newspaper clippings, obituaries, etc.

Series 2- Hudson Music Publications and Music Store Materials

1/10: Bulletins--Plattsburgh School of Music, 1882-83
1/11: Third Bulletin of the Plattsburgh School of Music: On the More Common Errors in the
       Performance of Music, ca. 1882-83
1/12: Hudson Music Store Materials
1/13: Hudson, Charles F.--Publications
1/14: Hudson, George H.--Publications

Series 3- George H. Hudson Research Notes and Manuscripts

1/15: Manuscript--The Purgatory Sections: Plattsburgh Bay to Spoon Bay
1/16: Manuscript--The Geology of Valcour Island
1/17: Manuscript-- Astronomy
1/18: Hudson, George H.—Research Correspondence
   Item 1  To: Dr. F. A. Bather
           From: George H. Hudson
           1/1/1917 (First page missing)
   Item 2  To: Dr. John M. Clarke, State Museum, Albany, N.Y.
           From: George H. Hudson
           1/10/1907
Item 3
To: Professor George H. Hudson
From: New York State Museum
10/21/1927

1/19: Pamphlet—Hudson, George H.—A Syllabus in Zoology
1/20: Gardening Information

Box 2

Series 4- Music Programs, Plays, and Notes

2/1: Plattsburgh Philharmonic Society Concert Programs, 1883-87; 1889
2/2: Plattsburgh Philharmonic Society Posters, 1884 and Prospectus, 1885-86
2/3: Plattsburgh Philharmonic Society—First Annual Convention Program, 1883
2/4: Plattsburgh Philharmonic Society—Third Annual Festival Program, 1887
2/5: Plattsburgh Philharmonic Society—Orchestra Programs, 1919; 1929
2/6: Church Musical Performance Programs, 1881-1931 (with gaps)
2/7: Keeseville Choral Union—Programs and Posters, 1883-86
2/8: Hudson, Charles F., Keeseville Singing School—Programs and Advertisements, 1881-83
2/9: Plattsburgh Area Concerts—Programs and Posters, 1883-1926 (with gaps); includes
some conducted by Lucy A. Hudson and Frederick C. Hudson
2/10: Local Area Concerts (Non-Plattsburgh)—Programs and Posters, 1877-1929 (with gaps)
2/11: Non-Local Area Concerts- Programs and Posters, 1883-1928 (with gaps)
2/12: Plays—Programs, Posters, and Script of “The Mikado”, 1884; 1906
2/13: Newspaper Clippings, 1896-1932

Series 5- Miscellaneous Material

2/14: Miscellaneous Items
   - Plattsburgh High School Commencement Program, 1883
   - Nazareth Hall Pennsylvania Prints
   - “Dedication of Bronze Tablet Commemorating the Battle of Plattsburgh”, 1903
   - Assembly Act creating Plattsburgh Normal School, 1/26/1897
   - Katherine Hudson school paper, “Zebulon Pike Expedition, 1805”, written in 1932

Box 3

Series 6- Scrapbooks, Journals, and Monographs

Scrapbooks

Scrapbook 1: Concert Programs and Posters, 1875-87
Scrapbook 2: Hudson, Charles F.—“Personal Notes”, 1877-85
Scrapbook 3: Hudson, Charles F.—“Musical Notes 1885”
Scrapbook 4: Hudson, Charles F.—“Music and Drama, Plattsburgh”, 1880-84
Scrapbook 5: Plattsburgh Philharmonic Society Concert Programs and Posters 1883-87
Scrapbook 6: Newspaper Clippings and Invitations--1932-33
Scrapbook 7: Newspaper Clippings, 1907-Most from The Boston Transcript
Scrapbook 8: Hudson, Lucy--Plattsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Journals

Journal 1: Hudson, George H.—Music Notes, 1877
Journal 2: Hudson, Lizzie B.—Poetry, 1865-1892; 1912
Journal 3: Travel Journal, November 1917-Unknown Author
Journal 4: Mineral Inventory Journal

Monographs

Monograph 1: Racster, Olga. “Chats on Big and Little Fiddles”
Monograph 3: Descriptive Gladiolus Nomenclature

Box 4- Oversized Material

Concert Posters
Hudson, Coranell--Dried Flowers
Keramic Studio Periodicals, 1902-05
Boston China Decorating Works Catalog
Hudson, Lizzie B.--Flower Paintings
Book- Queens of Drama
Newspapers
  - Advertisements for Hudson’s’ School of Music
  - Charles Bonesteel graduation from West Point
  - Women’s Journals
Plaster Cast of George H. Hudson
Metal Printing Plate of George H. Hudson