

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:

Hilliard-Pratt Family, Papers, 1834-1909

Location:

Stacks

Size of collection:

4 boxes

N.U.C.M.C. number:

RLIN id:

Sources of information on collection:

See accompanying sheet(s) for additional information.

Source of collection:

Gift of Stephen D. Pratt, 1995

Collection description:

The Hilliard and the Pratt families were both pioneers of New England. The first Hilliard arrived in 1635 and settled in New Hampshire. The Pratt family traces it's ancestry back to Thomas Pratt, who, though taking the oath of fidelity in Watertown, Massachusetts in 1652, could possibly have been there as early as 1647. The impetus for this collection was the marriage of Sarah McKean Hilliard (1840-1897) and Frederick Sumner Pratt (1845-1924).

The collection begins a generation earlier with Francis Hilliard (1806-1878) and Catherine Dexter (Haven) Hilliard (1802-1888). Francis, the son of William Hilliard (1779-1836) and Sarah (Lovering) Hilliard (1783-1848), was a lawyer, judge, and legal writer. He married, on 26 July 1831, Catherine Dexter, the daughter of Samuel Haven (1771-1847) and Elizabeth Craigie (Foster) Haven (1770-1851), and the sister of Samuel Foster Haven (1806-1881). They had five children: Francis William; Elizabeth Craigie Haven; Catherine Lydia; Samuel Haven; and Sarah McKean.

Francis William Hilliard (1832-1910) graduated from Harvard in 1852. He removed to North Carolina where he eventually became an Episcopal minister. He remained in the south throughout the Civil War and thereafter. He married, on 12 May 1857, Maria Nash Johnston (1836-1907), of Edenton, daughter of Samuel Iredell Johnston (1806-1865) and Margaret Ann (Burgwin) Johnston (1811-1886). They had seven children.

Elizabeth Craigie Haven Hilliard (1833-1879) never married but often helped to care for the families of friends and relatives.

Catherine Lydia Hilliard (1836-1917) married, on 29 April 1859, Frederick Gordon Burnham (1831-1918). They settled in Morristown, New Jersey and adopted one child.

Samuel Haven Hilliard (1838-1918) graduated from Harvard in 1859 and the General Theological Seminary (N.Y.) in 1863, and became an Episcopal minister. He married, in 1870, Alice A. Johnstone () of England. They had four children.

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Collection description (continued):

The Pratt family correspondence begins with Sumner Pratt (1809-1887) and Serena (Chase) Pratt (1815-1848). Sumner, the son of Elias Pratt (1773-1854) and Sally (Conant) Pratt (1777-1852), was a successful and respected entrepreneur in Worcester, Massachusetts, engaging in various aspects of the textile industry. He married, on 19 May 1836, Serena, daughter of Caleb Chase (1786-1848) and Fanny (Harris) Chase (1786-1839). They had two children: Frederick Sumner and Emma Amanda.

Emma Amanda Pratt (1848-1922) never married. According to family lore she owned the first electric car in Worcester.

After Serena's death Sumner married, on 5 August 1850, Abby Curtis Read (1818-1896), daughter of Ebenezer Read (1779-1837) and Sarah (Curtis) Read (1786-1834). They had one child: Edward Read (1851-1880).

Frederick Sumner Pratt was born in Worcester, Mass. He attended public schools and graduated from Worcester High School in 1862. He worked for the Worcester National Bank for four years, then became associated in business with his father and remained a member of the firm Sumner, Pratt & Company, until 1896, when he retired. He was a Republican in politics, a warden of All Saints' Church, a trustee of the Worcester County Institution for Savings, and an officer of the Worcester Art Society and the Worcester Art Museum. With his retirement in 1896, he was able to pursue his interest in portrait and landscape painting, an interest he had for many years, but was renewed after a visit from John Singer Sargent in 1890.

Frederick Sumner married, on 19 January 1871, Sarah McKean Hilliard in Worcester. They had five children: Francis Hilliard (1871-1871); Frederick Haven; Katherine Chase; Robert Gage; and Elisabeth Hilliard.

Frederick Haven Pratt (1873-1958) graduated from Harvard in 1896 and received his doctor's degree from Harvard Medical School in 1906. He also studied at the University of Gottingen. He was a devoted researcher in the field of physiology and a teacher of physiology at Wellesley College, the University of Buffalo, Clark University, and Harvard. He married, on 12 June 1912, Margery Willard Davis (1887-1964). They had five children.

Katharine Chase Pratt (1875-1942) married, on 2 June 1896, Dr. Alfred Lindsay Shapleigh (1869-1905). They went to China as missionaries in 1896 and then again in 1904, where in 1905 Dr. Shapleigh and their two remaining children died from small pox. Another child had died previously in Worcester. Katharine continued their work in China and returned to the United States around 1907.

Robert Gage Pratt (1877-1962) entered Harvard in the class of 1900, but left after three years to engage in the textile business in Worcester. He married, on 9 July 1906, Edith McCord Coleman (1880-1960). They had three children.

Elisabeth Hilliard Pratt (1882-1963) married, on 23 June 1906, Dr. William Irving Clark (1879-1958). They settled in Worcester and had two children.

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Collection description (continued):

This collection of approximately 550 letters was written by members of two New England families mostly in the nineteenth century. The exception is Frederick Haven Pratt, the most prolific correspondent, who wrote most of his 160 letters between 1904 and 1910.

The letters reveal correspondents who found it easy to express their feelings of concern and affection for each other. They were also concerned with the well-being of their fellow man and for many of the Hilliard/Pratt family this translated into service to the Episcopal church as ministers, church officers, Sunday school teachers, and choir members.

Domestic and family matters figure prominently in the correspondence of Catherine Burnham in Morristown to her sister Sarah Pratt in Worcester. Catherine Dexter Haven Hilliard lived her final years with her daughter, Catherine Burnham, and writes from the perspective of one who has "walked 86 years along the wonderful 19th c. from its early infancy to near its culmination."

Frederick Haven Pratt wrote often to his parents from college and from his trips abroad. His mother died in 1897 so it was to his father that he wrote for advice about his career, and to share his enthusiasm for art and photography. He wrote wonderfully descriptive letters about his fellow boarders in Gottingen where he studied in the summer of 1899. He wrote of German customs, tramped through the Harz Mountains, and declared "oh it is a glorious thing to feel at home in the world."

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Sources of Information on Collection

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Powell, William S., ed. Dictionary of North Carolina Biography. Vol. III. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Pratt, Frederick Haven. The Craigies: A Footnote to the Medical History of the Revolution. 1941; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge Historical Society, 1996.

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Contents List

Box 1: Correspondence, 1834 - 19 October 1865

Folder

1	1834 -	1845
2	9 May 1851 -	10 Aug 1857
3	25 Aug 1857 -	22 Sep 1858
4	5 Oct 1858 -	27 Sep 1859
5	8 Oct 1859 -	5 Dec 1859
6	8 Jan 1860 -	7 Feb 1860
7	10 Feb 1860 -	15 May 1860
8	24 May 1860 -	19 Nov 1860
9	1 Dec 1860 -	7 Feb 1861
10	18 Feb 1861 -	11 Apr 1861
11	4 Jul 1861 -	21 Dec 1861
12	7 Jan 1862 -	4 Jul 1862
13	13 Jul 1862 -	2 Nov 1862
14	6 Nov 1862 -	7 Mar 1863
15	16 Apr 1863 -	10 Jul 1863
16	27 Jul 1863 -	11 Sep 1863
17	14 Oct 1863 -	24 Nov 1863
18	25 Nov 1863 -	20 Jan 1864
19	22 Jan 1864 -	12 Jun 1864
20	20 Jun 1864 -	13 Aug 1864
21	14 Aug 1864 -	21 Sep 1864
22	22 Sep 1864 -	11 Nov 1864
23	2 Dec 1864 -	7 Feb 1865
24	16 Feb 1865 -	3 May 1865
25	26 May 1865 -	30 Jul 1865
26	13 Aug 1865 -	19 Oct 1865

Box 2: Correspondence, 20 October 1865 - 1 November 1895

Folder

1	20 Oct 1865 -	18 Jan 1866
2	31 Jan 1866 -	18 Feb 1866
3	18 Feb 1866 -	21 Apr 1866
4	23 Apr 1866 -	6 Aug 1866
5	7 Aug 1866 -	5 Oct 1866
6	3 Nov 1866 -	25 Dec 1866
7	14 Jan 1867 -	13 May 1867
8	5 Jun 1867 -	15 Aug 1867
9	22 Aug 1867 -	24 Dec 1867
10	Mar 1868 -	2 Jul 1868
11	5 Jul 1868 -	22 Sep 1868
12	24 Sep 1868 -	15 Feb 1869
13	21 Feb 1869 -	29 Jan 1870
14	10 Mar 1870 -	May 1870
15	10 Jun 1870 -	7 Aug 1870
16	23 Aug 1870 -	10 Jul 1872
17	18 Jul 1872 -	21 Dec 1879
18	24 Aug 1881 -	28 Aug 1881

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Contents List

(cont.)

Box 2: Correspondence, 20 October 1865 - 1 November 1895 (cont.)

Folder

19	29 Aug 1881 - 4 Aug 1882
20	23 Oct 1882 - 7 Mar 1883
21	25 Apr 1883 - 18 Dec 1883
22	21 Dec 1883 - 20 Aug 1884
23	15 Nov 1884 - 25 Jul 1885
24	17 Aug 1885 - 29 Dec 1885
25	13 Jan 1886 - 14 Sep 1886
26	1 Dec 1886 - 29 May 1887
27	22 Jun 1887 - 22 Mar 1888
28	25 May 1888 - 8 Aug 1888
29	11 Aug 1888 - 29 Aug 1890
30	12 Jun 1891 - 1 Feb 1892
31	20 Mar 1892 - 14 Aug 1893
32	25 Sep 1893 - 23 Jul 1894
33	8 Oct 1894 - 1 Nov 1895

Box 3: Correspondence, 19 December 1895 - 10 August 1905

Folder

1	19 Dec 1895 - 17 Aug 1897
2	1 Sep 1897 - 31 Jan 1898
3	7 Feb 1898 - 27 Apr 1898
4	16 May 1898 - 22 May 1899
5	23 May 1899 - 4 Jun 1899
6	11 Jun 1899 - 22 Jun 1899
7	25 Jun 1899 - 9 Jul 1899
8	12 Jul 1899 - 4 Aug 1899
9	11 Aug 1899 - 31 Aug 1899
10	2 Sep 1899
11	4 Sep 1899 - 12 Oct 1899
12	16 Oct 1899 - 20 Nov 1899
13	12 Jan 1900 - 2 Apr 1900
14	15 Apr 1900 - 22 Aug 1901
15	16 Sep 1901 - 1 Dec 1901
16	3 Dec 1901 - 20 Dec 1901
17	20 Jan 1902 - 13 Mar 1902
18	15 May 1902 - 10 Jun 1902
19	11 Jul 1902 - 23 Sep 1902
20	7 Oct 1902 - 14 Dec 1902
21	17 Apr 1903 - 31 Aug 1903
22	18 Sep 1903 - 30 Dec 1903
23	7 Jan 1904 - 15 Feb 1904
24	28 Feb 1904 - 13 Jun 1904
25	13 Jul 1904 - 3 Dec 1904
26	17 Dec 1904 - 16 Jun 1904
27	22 Jun 1905 - 10 Aug 1905

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Contents List
(cont.)

Box 4: Correspondence, 17 August 1905 - 13 October 1909; undated

Folder 1 17 Aug 1905 - 29 Mar 1906

Seven letters from FHP to his father FSP

2	1 May 1906 - 5 Aug 1906
3	9 Aug 1906 - 7 Sep 1906
4	16 Sep 1906 - 19 Nov 1906
5	5 Dec 1906 - 20 Jan 1907
6	23 Jan 1907 - 21 Mar 1907
7	25 Mar 1907 - 16 Apr 1907
8	16 Jul 1907 - 11 Feb 1908
9	26 Feb 1908 - 1 Jun 1908
10	8 Jun 1908 - 18 Feb 1909
11	3 Mar 1909 - 29 Apr 1909
12	12 Jun 1909 - 6 Aug 1909
13	14 Aug 1909 - 24 Sep 1909
14	7 Oct 1909 - 13 Oct 1909
15	undated/partial letters
16	undated/to Catherine H. Hilliard & Francis Hilliard from Elizabeth Hilliard
17	undated/to Emma Pratt from Abby C. Pratt; Sarah H. Pratt; Frederick S. Pratt
18	undated/to Frederick S. Pratt from Frederick H. Pratt; Robert G. Pratt
19	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Frederick Burnham; Jenny Chapman
20	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Catherine H. Burnham (1)
21	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Catherine H. Burnham (2)
22	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Catherine H. Burnham (3)
23	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Catherine H. Burnham (4)
24	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Catherine H. Burnham (5)
25	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Catherine D. H. Hilliard
26	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Elizabeth Hilliard (1)
27	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Elizabeth Hilliard (2)
28	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Francis Hilliard
29	undated/to Sarah Hilliard Pratt from Samuel Haven Hilliard
30	miscellaneous
31	notes of processor
32	genealogical notes