

Fannie R. Brewer Scrapbook of Military and Art History, ca. 1875-1933

Repository: Hingham Public Library

Creator: Fannie R. Brewer

Quantity: 1 flat box

Processed By: Stephanie McBain

Access: Open for research. Some materials have been placed in protective enclosures and should not be removed from them.

Provenance

This scrapbook was created by Fannie R. Brewer during the early 20th century and was given to the Hingham Public Library by an anonymous donor.

Biographical Note

Family and Friends

Fannie Reed Brewer was born in Boston on April 9, 1858 to John Reed Brewer (1818-1893) and Caroline Sayles Brewer (1821-1887). The Brewers lived on Commonwealth Ave in Boston and had a summer estate at World's End in Hingham. They also owned Sarah and Langley Islands. Among Fannie's many great interests were the military, art, writers, and travel. She never married, and resided in the family homes in Boston and Hingham until her death in September 1936.

Brigadier General Alston Hamilton and his family were friends of Fannie's. Alston was born in Oxford, North Carolina on October 20, 1871. He married Nancy Creel (ca. 1877-1930) of Kentucky, and they had two children: son John (b. ca. 1898) and daughter Alston (b. 1911). Hamilton was a Colonel, then a Brigadier General, and served for a time in the Panama Canal Zone.

Wilbur Fenno Thayer was married to Fannie's niece Augusta Brewer Thayer (1899-1940), with whom he had two children. He was born on June 19, 1885 in Braintree to Wilbur and Mabel Whitman Thayer. He graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1907 with a degree in Law, and served in the Navy during World War I as a member of the court-martial. Wilbur died on February 2, 1969 in Santa Barbara, California.

Wilmon Brewer, Fannie's nephew, was born in Hingham on April 1, 1895 to Francis (1846-1907) and Augusta Edwards Brewer (1869-1934). He lived on the family's Great Hill estate for most of his life. He graduated from Harvard in 1917 and served as a Second Lieutenant in France during World War I, for which he was awarded a Purple Heart. In 1922 he married Katharine Hay More (1898-1994). After the war he returned to Harvard to study literature, becoming a prominent classical scholar with several published works, including his autobiography *Looking Backwards*. Wilmon and Katharine were generous philanthropists, donating the Old Ordinary to the Hingham Historical Society and 300 acres of Great Hill to the town, which became the World's End reservation. Wilmon was also a Trustee of the Hingham Public Library. He died on January 1, 1998 and is buried with Katharine in Hingham.

Westmore Willcox, Jr. was the son of Fannie's friend, writer Louise Collier Willcox (1865-1929). He was born in Norfolk, Virginia on October 23, 1894 and married Esther Leavens Jenkins (1898-1981) in 1917. He worked as an investment banker after graduating from Harvard. He also served as an officer in the naval aviation corps during World War I and as a captain in the militia during World War II. Westmore died in New York on May 12, 1971.

Famous New Englanders

John Davis Long was a Hingham resident and the 32nd Governor of Massachusetts. He was born in Buckfield, Maine on October 27, 1838 to Zadoc (1800-1873) and Julia Davis Long (1807-1869). John graduated from Harvard in 1857 with a degree in Law. In 1870 he married Mary Woodward Glover (1845-1882) of Roxbury, and they had two daughters that survived to adulthood: Margaret (1873-1957) and Helen (1875-1901). After Mary died, John married Agnes Peirce of North Attleboro in 1886 (1860-1934) and they had a son named Peirce (1887-1941). John was a state Representative from 1875 to 1878, Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1876 to 1878, Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1879, Governor from 1880 to 1882, Representative in the United States Congress from 1883 to 1889, and Secretary of the Navy from 1897 to 1902. He resided on Cottage Street in Hingham and died on August 28, 1915.

Daniel Chester French was an American Renaissance sculptor. He was born in Exeter, New Hampshire on April 20, 1850 to Henry (1813-1885) and Anne Richardson French. The family moved to Concord, Massachusetts in 1867, where Daniel became a friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Alcott family. Daniel studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before going to Florence, Italy to study art with Thomas Ball. His first well-known sculpture was *Minute Man*, commissioned in 1875 by the town of Concord. His most famous work is the statue of Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial. Another of his well-known statues is of John Harvard in Cambridge. Daniel died in Stockbridge in 1931 and is buried in Concord.

Walter Gay was a painter known for his scenes of French peasant life. He born in Hingham on January 22, 1856 to Ebenezer (1818-1899) and Ellen Blood Gay (1831-1917). He married Matilda E. Travers of New York City, and they moved to Paris in 1876. Walter received several awards from the Paris Salon and other European art organizations. His work has been displayed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Tate Gallery, and the Luxembourg. He was also an Officer of the Legion of Honor and was elected to the National Academy of Design in 1904. Walter died on July 15, 1937. Matilda remained in their home in France, which was taken over by German officers during World War II; she died there in 1943.

Evelyn (Evelina) Parnell was a well-known soprano opera singer. She was born in Boston on August 21, 1888 to English father George A. Parnell. She studied singing in New York City and debuted as Aida with the Boston Opera Company in 1908, then performed in operas across Italy, Austria, and Switzerland. She died in New York on October 9, 1939 following an appendectomy.

Edith (Williams) Barrett was a stage and film actress born in Roxbury on January 19, 1907. She performed in theater troupes and on Broadway in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1938 she married actor Vincent Price (1911-1993); they had one son together, writer Vincent Barrett Price (b. 1940), before divorcing in 1948. She made her film debut in 1941 in *Ladies in Retirement*, and acted in several other films before retiring in 1956. She died in New Mexico on February 22, 1977.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains various items of memorabilia relating to Fannie's own travels, friends, and family members, as well as to famous New Englanders and military and art history. Some areas of particular interest include the theater and opera, writers, sculpture, the Panama Canal Zone, World War I, and West Point. Documents include photographs and drawings, correspondence, newspaper articles and photographs, programs and advertisements, passports, holiday cards, and handwritten and typed notes. The scrapbook was not bound or organized, so its original arrangement is unknown.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into the following nine series:

- Series I. Art and Artists, 1890-1914
- Series II. England and Scotland, 1897-1924
- Series III. Family and Friends, 1892-1933
- Series IV. Military, 1897-1931
- Series V. Miscellaneous Memorabilia, 1875-1931
- Series VI. Panama Canal, ca. 1920
- Series VII. Politicians, 1897-1920
- Series VIII. Theater and Opera, 1907-1933
- Series IX. Writers, 1890-1913

Series I. Art and Artists, 1890-1914

Box 1, folder 1

This series includes images of the work of two artists from Massachusetts, sculptor Daniel Chester French and painter Walter Gay. The majority of the series relates to French and some of his well-known sculptures. The series also contains images of miscellaneous drawings, paintings, and statues.

Series II. England and Scotland, 1897-1924

Box 1, folder 2

The images in this series all depict people and places in the United Kingdom. Several photographs of Queen Victoria are included, as well as photographs of the Queen's residences at Balmoral and Osborne House, Canterbury Cathedral, Tennyson's home in Surrey, and Sir Walter Scott's home in Scotland.

Series III. Family and Friends, 1892-1933

Box 1, folder 3

The items in this series relate to Fannie's friends and family members and include correspondence, holiday cards, and photographs. Fannie's nephews Wilmon Brewer and Wilbur Fenno Thayer, as well as family friend Westmore Willcox, Jr. are featured most frequently in the collection, which also includes several poems written by Westmore and Wilmon, newspaper articles, notes on military service, and an invitation to Westmore's wedding. The "Military" series also contains items relating to Fannie's family members and friends who served in the military.

Series IV. Military, 1897-1931

Box 1, folder 4

This series includes correspondence, photographs, handwritten and typed notes, printed and sketched maps, and newspaper articles, all relating to the military and its history and soldiers. Some of the areas focused on are World War I, France, the Philippines, and West Point. Historical figures include Confederate General Joseph Wheeler and Lord Cornwallis, a leading British General during the Revolutionary War.

Series V. Miscellaneous Memorabilia, 1875-1931

Box 1, folder 5

This series contains several unidentified photographs; various handwritten, typed, and photocopied letters; and Fannie's 1924 passport, which was granted for travel to "all countries."

Series VI. Panama Canal, ca. 1920

Box 1, folder 6

The items in this series relate to the Panama Canal, its construction, and Fannie's own trip to Panama in 1920. Items include details of the canal and the military presence in the Canal Zone, a landscape map of the isthmus of Panama, photographs of the canal, and an article on a visit by Edward VIII, then the Prince of Wales. Photographs of Fannie's time in Panama and her passport from the trip are also included.

Series VII. Politicians, 1897-1920

Box 1, folder 7

This series features two prominent politicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Robert Lansing, the 42nd Secretary of State, and John D. Long, the 32nd Governor of Massachusetts. Photographs of Lansing include one with President Woodrow Wilson, and those of Long include one with President William McKinley. Also included are images of Long's wife and children and an article about his younger daughter Helen, as well as information on Lansing's various political disagreements and eventual resignation.

Series VIII. Theater and Opera, 1907-1933

Box 1, folder 8

This series includes photographs, drawings, articles, programs, and advertisements of theater and opera performers and shows. Featured performers include Edith Barrett, Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Booth, Betty Butler, Christine Claiborne, Evelina Parnell, and Anne Seymour. Many of the photographs show the performers in costume, and the articles and programs describe the shows and sets. Also included are photographs of opera houses in Europe, Lakewood Theatre in Maine, and Booth's Theatre in New York.

Series IX. Writers, 1890-1913

Box 1, folder 9

This series includes images of and articles about some of the famous authors of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Images are of William Dean Howells, Henrik Ibsen, Sarah Orne Jewett, Lucy Larcom, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and George Sand, and articles describe the careers of Henrik Ibsen and Oscar Wilde.