

Connecticut Historical Society
museum & library

Rockwell Family Papers, 1812-1927

A Guide to the collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

Collection Overview

Repository:	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
Creator :	Rockwell Family
Title :	Rockwell Family Papers
Dates :	1812-1927
Extent :	1.25 linear feet (2.5 boxes)
Location:	Ms 99802
Language:	English

Biographical Sketch

John Arnold Rockwell (1803-1861) of Norwich, Connecticut, was a graduate of Yale College in 1822. He then studied law with Judge Swift of Windham, Conn. and Calvin Goddard of Norwich. Rockwell represented Norwich as a senator in the State Legislature before being elected to Congress in 1845. In 1831 he married Mary Watkinson Perkins. They had sons Alfred Perkins (1834-1903), John Arnold (1829-1924) and Joseph P. Rockwell (1843-1885).

Alfred Perkins Rockwell graduated from Yale in 1858 after studying chemistry at the Sheffield Scientific School. He then studied mining at the Museum of Practical Geology in London and at the School of Mines in Freiberg, Saxony. In 1865, after serving as a Captain with the First Connecticut Light Battery during the Civil War, Alfred was appointed Professor of Mining in the Sheffield Scientific School and three years later took a similar position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. From 1873 to 1876 he was chairman of Boston's Board of Fire Commissioners. From 1876-1879 he served as President of the Eastern Railroad Co., after which he became treasurer of the Great Falls (N.H.) Manufacturing Co.

Alfred married Katherine Virginia Foote (1839-1902) on June 20, 1865. She was the daughter of Samuel E. (1787-1858) and Elizabeth (Elliott) Foote (1807-1878) of New Haven, Conn. Their daughter Katharine Diana Ward Rockwell, who seems to have gone by Diana, married her second cousin Eliot Sumner in 1907. Eliot Sumner (b. 1873) was the son of the noted

educator, economist and social scientist William Graham Sumner and his wife Jennie (Eliot) Sumner.

Katherine Rockwell's sister, Frances Elizabeth Foote (1835-1875), called Fanny, married Edwin Lawrence Godkin (1831-1902) of New York, a lawyer who later devoted himself to newspaper publishing, including the New York Evening Post. They had one child who lived to adulthood, Lawrence Godkin (1860-1929), a New York City lawyer.

John A. Rockwell married Martha D. Ayers and opened a doctor's office in Stamford, Conn. Joseph P. Rockwell served in the army during the Civil War and died early, in 1885.

Scope and Content

The collection was purchased from a dealer in New Jersey who had tried to organize the papers by correspondent. A new order was created and the collection divided into four series: Series I Rockwell family papers, Series II Sumner family papers, Series III Godkin family papers, and Series IV other family papers.

Series I: Rockwell Family Papers The Rockwell family papers begin with three letters written by to John Arnold Rockwell, the Senator, two to his family, 1845, 1853 and one business related, 1846. The majority of letters in Mary W. Rockwell's papers are letters she wrote to sons John and Alfred, 1864-1873, and one to her daughter-in-law Kate, undated. Also among her papers is a "Plan of Lands owned by Mary W. Rockwell and others" in Norwich, dated 1882.

Alfred P. Rockwell's papers primarily consist of correspondence. Incoming correspondence, 1865-1893 and undated, are from business associates or people interested in buying and selling land, and from friends and a few family members. These are arranged chronologically. Alfred's outgoing letters are divided by recipient; letters to brothers Joseph and John date 1865-1884, while those to his wife Kate date from 1869-1873, and, in 1901, a series of letters written from Vienna, Austria, where he was in a sanatorium trying to regain his health. Alfred's other papers include general outgoing correspondence, 1885-1901, bills and receipts, 1872-1901, military records, and a history of the Boston Fire Commission.

Kate wrote often to Alfred when he was away from home, and her letters to him, most of which are not dated beyond the month and day, form the bulk of her papers. Kate also kept letters from her sister Elizabeth Foote, undated, as well as general incoming and outgoing correspondence, 1860-1898. Parts of letters Kate and Alfred wrote to each other are arranged after their papers in the hopes that someone will be able to reunite the orphan pages with their original letters.

Kate and Alfred's daughter went by the name of Diana, evidently to prevent confusing her with her mother. Diana carried on a healthy correspondence with friends and relations. Her incoming correspondence dates from 1898-1916, with many of hers also lacking a year as part of the date. Outgoing correspondence, 1897-1910, includes a copy of her wedding invitation.

Alfred's brother John wrote to him fairly frequently from 1868-1888. John also wrote to brother Joseph, 1881-1885, up to his untimely death. Additional correspondence and some bills, 1873-1887 and undated, complete his papers. John's wife Martha is represented by some outgoing correspondence, 1868 and undated.

Brother Joseph Rockwell is also represented by incoming and outgoing correspondence, 1873-1885, and bills and receipts, 1883-1885. Charles H. Rockwell's correspondence dates 1867-1901. There are a number of letters addressed to Miss or Mrs. Rockwell. Without an envelope to provide an address, it is hard to attribute the letters to any one person. These rather anonymous letters, 1883, 1902 and undated, follow the rest of the Rockwell family's papers. The final material in this Series is correspondence from various Rockwell relatives, 1865, 1883 and undated.

Series II: Sumner Family Papers Series II contains the papers of the Sumner family, the family into which Diana Rockwell married. William Sumner's papers consists of correspondence, 1880-1908, bills and receipts, 1871-1908, and a memorandum book attributed to him, 1885. His son Eliot, who married Diana, is represented by incoming correspondence, several undated letters written to Diana, wedding notices clipped from a newspaper, and his YMCA card, 1927.

Series III: Godkin Family Papers The Godkin family papers are arranged in Series III. Fanny (Francis Foote) Godkin's correspondence includes incoming letters, 1864-1872 and undated, and a lock of her hair probably taken at her death. The bulk of Fanny's letters, however, were written to her sister Kate Rockwell, all of which lack a year in the date. Edwin L. Godkin's papers include correspondence, 1876-1892, and a typed agreement made with Kate concerning Fanny's estate, 1885. Lawrence Godkin wrote to his Uncle Alfred, among others, 1884-1885. The rest of his correspondence dates 1896-1901.

Series IV: Other Family Papers Other family papers include documents relating to families that married into the Rockwell's. Most of the Foote family correspondence, 1854-1868, is to or from Samuel Foote, as are the financial accounts and bills, 1868. The two letters in Perkins family correspondence date 1854 and 1907. Elliot family papers, 1812-1915, contain an 1812 financial account, correspondence, bills, and a hand-drawn outline of the family. The final folder in the collection consists of materials that came with the collection but do not appear to have any direct family correlation and date 1816-1863.

Family photographs accompanying this collection were transferred to the Graphics Department

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Use Restrictions

Use of the material requires compliance with the Connecticut Historical Society's Research Center regulations.

Subject Headings

Personal Names

Godkin, Edwin Lawrence, 1832-1902.
Godkin, Frances Elizabeth Foote, 1835-1875.
Godkin, Lawrence, 1869-1929.
Rockell, Katherine Virginia Foote, 1839-1902.
Rockwell, Alfred Perkins, 1834-1903.
Rockwell, John Arnold, 1803-1861.
Rockwell, John Arnold, 1829-1924.
Rockwell, Joseph Perkins, 1843-1885.
Rockwell, Mary Watkins Perkins.
Sumner, Diana Ward Rockwell.
Sumner, Elliott, b. 1873.
Sumner, William Graham, 1840-1910.

Family Names

Elliot family.
Foote family.
Perkins family.

Subjects

Norwich (Conn.) --History --Sources.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (Box #, Folder #). Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

Processing Details

Collection was processed by Barbara Austen in 2007.

EAD Finding Aid created July 2011.

Accruals

The collection is closed.

Contents:

Series I: Rockwell family papers, 1845-1901

Box	Folder	
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1	1	John A. Rockwell correspondence, 1845,1846, 1853
1	2	Mary W. Rockwell correspondence, 1864-1882
1	3-11	Alfred P. Rockwell incoming correspondence, 1865-1893, undated
1	12-13	Alfred P. Rockwell letters to his brothers John and Joseph, 1865-1884
1	14-15	.Alfred P. Rockwell, letters to wife Kate, 1869-1873,1901 1869-1873,1901
1	16-17	Alfred P. Rockwell, outgoing correspondence, 1885-1901
1	18-19	Alfred P. Rockwell bills and receipts, 1872-1901
1	20	Alfred P. Rockwell military records,
1	21	Alfred P. Rockwell history of the Fire Commission
1	22	Kate V. Rockwell letters from E.E. Foote, undated
1	23-25	Kate V. Rockwell incoming correspondence, 1860-1898, undated
1	26	Kate V. Rockwell outgoing correspondence, 1883-1898, undated
1	27-34	Kate V. Rockwell letters to husband Alfred, 1864-1874, undated

Box	Folder	
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2	1-3	Kate V. Rockwell letters to husband Alfred, undated
2	4	Partial letters to and from Kate and Alfred
2	5-10	Diana Rockwell Sumner incoming correspondence, 1898-1916, undated
2	11	Diana R. Sumner outgoing correspondence, 1897-1910
2	12-15	John A. Rockwell letters to brother Alfred, 1868-1888

2	16	John A. Rockwell letters to brother Joseph, 1881-1885
2	17	John A. Rockwell, correspondence and bills, 1873-1887
2	18	Martha Rockwell correspondence, 1868, undated
2	19-21	Joseph Rockwell incoming correspondence, 1879-1885
2	22	Joseph Rockwell outgoing correspondence, 1873, undated
2	23	Joseph Rockwell bills and receipts, 1883-1885
2	24	Charles H. Rockwell correspondence, 1867-1901, undated
2	25	Miss or Mrs. Rockwell correspondence, 1883,1902, undated
2	26	Rockwell relative correspondence, 1865, 1883, undated

Series II: Sumner family papers, 1871-1927

Box Folder

2	27	William Sumner correspondence, 1880-1908
2	28-30	William Sumner bills and receipts, 1871-1908
2	31	William Sumner [attributed] memorandum book, 1885
2	32	Elliot Sumner incoming correspondence, 1899-1907
2	33	Elliot Sumner letters to Diana Rockwell Sumner; wedding notices from newspapers; YMCA membership card, undated; 1927

Series III: Godkin family papers, 1864-1901

Box Folder

3	1	Fanny Godkin incoming correspondence; lock of hair, 1864-1872, undated; ca. 1876
3	2-6	Fanny Godkin letters to Kate Rockwell, undated
3	7	Fanny Godkin outgoing correspondence, undated
3	8	E.L. Godkin correspondence; Agreement with Kate Rockwell, 1876-1892;1885
3	9	Lawrence Godkin outgoing correspondence, 1884-1885
3	10	Lawrence Godkin correspondence, 1896-1901

Series IV: Other family papers, 1812-1915

Box Folder

3	11	Incomplete letters from various authors
3	12	Foote family correspondence, 1854-1868
3	13	Foote family financial records, 1868
3	14	Perkins family correspondence, 1854, 1907
3	15	Elliot family papers, 1812-1915
3	16	Unidentified papers, 1816-1863