

Connecticut Historical Society
museum & library

Barrett family papers

A Guide to the collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

Collection Overview

Repository:	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
Creator :	Barrett family.
Title :	Barrett Family Papers
Dates :	1820-1883
Extent :	0.50 linear foot (1 box)
Location:	Ms 98718
Language:	English

Biographical Sketch

R. Cecil Barrett was born about 1830 in Massachusetts. He married Catherine Hewins of Sharon, Massachusetts and for a time lived in Somers, Connecticut. It was as a resident of Somers that Cecil enlisted in the 16th Regiment, Company A Connecticut Volunteers in 1862. He held the rank of Corporal. The 16th Regiment saw action at the battles of Antietam, Maryland (where Cecil was wounded and captured), Fredericksburg and Suffolk, Virginia, and was present when General Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House. On April 5, 1865, Cecil was promoted to 1st Lieutenant, Company B, 31st (Connecticut) United States Colored Infantry. He transferred to Company F in October, 1864, and a month later transferred again to Company H, which in June 1865 found itself in Texas. He was promoted to Captain March 5, 1865 and mustered out of the service November 7, 1865.

After the war, the Barrett family settled in Springfield, Mass. where Cecil was a teacher and school superintendent. Among Cecil and Catherine's children were sons Edward, Erastus, Howard and Arthur. Erastus married Cornelia Newell. Arthur moved to Colorado to seek his fortune and Edward eventually became the Comptroller of what became the California Institute of Technology.

Scope and Content

The collection was donated to the library by the great grandson of R. Cecil Barrett. Cecil apparently gave these papers to his son Edward, who handed them down to his son, the donor's father.

The bulk of the collection consists of letters written by Cecil to his wife Catherine while he was serving in the army during the Civil War. His letters are filled with religious contemplations, comments about how much he missed his wife, admonitions to his sons to behave for their mother, and detailed descriptions of camp life, picket duty, and battles. Several letters include messages to Edward and/or Erastus. A number of letters were multi-paged and the pages got separated. An attempt has been made to match the texts and return errant pages to their appropriate letters.

Also in the collection are letters among members of the Hewins family, 1820-1833, primarily written to Nancy and Increase Hewins of Sharon, Mass. Two poems were written for a Catharine Hewins at her death in 1823. In addition to the letters from her husband, Catherine Hewins Barrett received letters from her aunt Nancy Hewins, 1863-1865. Erastus Barrett is represented by letters to his mother, 1875, a letter to his sister, 1875, his marriage certificate, 1878, and two colored photographs of what are probably his sons or grandsons, Dick, Newell, Donald and George.

Horace wrote letters to his sister (1875) and his mother (1878) which are in the collection. Arthur wrote two letters home, the one in 1883 mailed from Colorado. Erastus' wife Cornelia is represented by letters she wrote to her sister Jennie, 1876-1883, and to her parents, 1883. There are also photographs of Jennie and Cornelia Newell Barrett.

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

Barrett, Catherine Hewins.
Barrett, Cornelia Newell.
Barrett, Erastus.
Barrett, R. Cecil, b. ca. 1830.
Hewins family.

Corporate Names

United States. Army. Colored Infantry. Regiment 31st (1864-1865).
United States. Army. Connecticut Infantry. Regiment 16th (1862-1865).

Geographic Names

Somers (Conn.)
Springfield (Mass.)

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

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

Processing Details

EAD Finding Aid created March 2011.

Accruals

The collection is closed.

Contents:

Papers

Box Folder

1	1	Hewins family correspondence, 1820-1833
1	2	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, 1859-1862
1	3	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, January 1863
1	4	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, February 1863
1	5	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, March-April 1863
1	6	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, May -June 1863

Barrett family papers, 1820-1883

1	7	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, July -August 1863
1	8	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, September 1863-January 1864
1	9	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, February-March1864
1	10	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, October -November 1864
1	11	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, December 1864
1	12	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, February-March1865
1	13	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, April -June 1865
1	14	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, July 1865-August 1879
1	15	Letters from Cecil Barrett to Catherine, or partial undated
1	16	Letters to Catherine Barrett from family, 1863- ca. 1871
1	17	Erastus Barrett correspondence, wedding certificate and photographs, 1871-1878
1	18	Horace Barrett correspondence, 1875-1878
1	19	Arthur Barrett correspondence, 1874 1883
1	20	Letters from Cornelia Barrett to Jennie, and photographs 1876-1883
1	21	Letters from Cornelia Barrett to her parents, 1883
1	22	Unidentified items