

Inventary

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RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION
ACCESSION SHEET

Accession # 56 M 80, 57 M 42, 58 M 8

Location 5(R) - c - 1/3

Title CRANE FAMILY. PAPERS.

Approximate inclusive dates 1819-1944; bulk, 1860-1900

Date of receipt 1956, additions in 1957, 1958 Received from Mrs. Thomas F. Burgess

Volume on arrival unknown

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 19 AB, 6 volumes (8.7 l.f.)

Condition Fair to good. Some iron gall ink eating through documents.
Some newspaper clippings in need of xeroxing

Restrictions

Description

See attached sheets

Special Formats Photographs Maps Audio Tapes Films Graphics
 Artifacts Machine-readable records
 Other (list) some music

Temporary catalog card added entries

See attached sheet

Accessioned by CF

Date September 9, 1988

CRANE FAMILY PAPERS

Biographical Note

Alexander Baxter Crane, Union colonel, New York lawyer, and active citizen of Scarsdale, New York, was born in 1833 in Berkley, Massachusetts. He was the son of Abial Briggs and Emma Porter Crane and a descendent of Henry Crane, who settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1640.

Alexander graduated from Amherst College in 1854 and subsequently relocated to Terre Haute, Indiana, where he read law, was admitted to the bar, and served a term as district attorney. In 1862, he and Colonel John Baird organized the 85th Indiana Volunteers, which fought for the Union in the Civil War. Alexander had a distinguished army career, leading the regiment in the Atlanta Campaign and Sherman's March to the Sea. As a judge advocate on a special military commission in Kentucky, he called negroes to testify against whites, drawing challenges from local individuals. He argued successfully for negro testimony, applying principles of international law.

After the war, Alexander married Laura Cornelia Mitchell in New York City. Laura Cornelia was the daughter of John W. Mitchell, originally of Charleston, South Carolina, and Caroline Green Mitchell of New York. Caroline Green Mitchell was the daughter of Timothy R. Green, who was a cousin of Mary Martin Crane, wife of Alexander's uncle Silas Axtel Crane. Alexander's aunt Caroline Crane Marsh had taught in a school run by John Mitchell's sister-in-law, Martha L. Mitchell.*

Alexander entered law practice in New York with his father-in-law and brother-in-law Clarence G. Mitchell, forming the firm of Mitchells & A. B. Crane in 1865, the year of his marriage. This firm continued until 1879, when Crane formed a partnership with Stephen Lockwood, Crane & Lockwood, which lasted until 1915. In both practices, Alexander represented large estates and prominent corporations and individuals, including the railroad baron John I. Blair. Exceptions in his clientele were the near-indigent and publicly despised Reverend Robert Holden and Francis Edward Eldredge, whom he defended against a libel suit filed by Mrs. Dennis McMahon in 1873.

Alexander and Laura Cornelia had six children - Elizabeth Green, Caroline Emma, Helen Cornelia, Aurelia Blair, Alexander Mitchell, and Laura Vernon. In 1873, the family moved to its estate, Holmhurst, in Scarsdale, New York. With the move, Alexander became one of the first suburban commuters, traveling by railroad to his office in New York. He was active in Westchester County affairs as one of the governors of the White Plains hospital and a leader in the movement to prevent White Plains from using the Bronx River for sewage disposal.

Laura Vernon, a relation of Alexander's for whom his youngest daughter was named, came to live with the family in Scarsdale, serving, in effect, as governess to the children. In 1881, the Crane girls moved with her to Italy, where Alexander's aunt Caroline Crane Marsh, an author, had lived for years with her husband, George Perkins Marsh, a linguist and U.S. minister to Italy. Among Alexander's other relations abroad was Edward A. Crane, a doctor who had worked for the U.S. Sanitary Commission during the Civil War and edited the American Register in Paris.

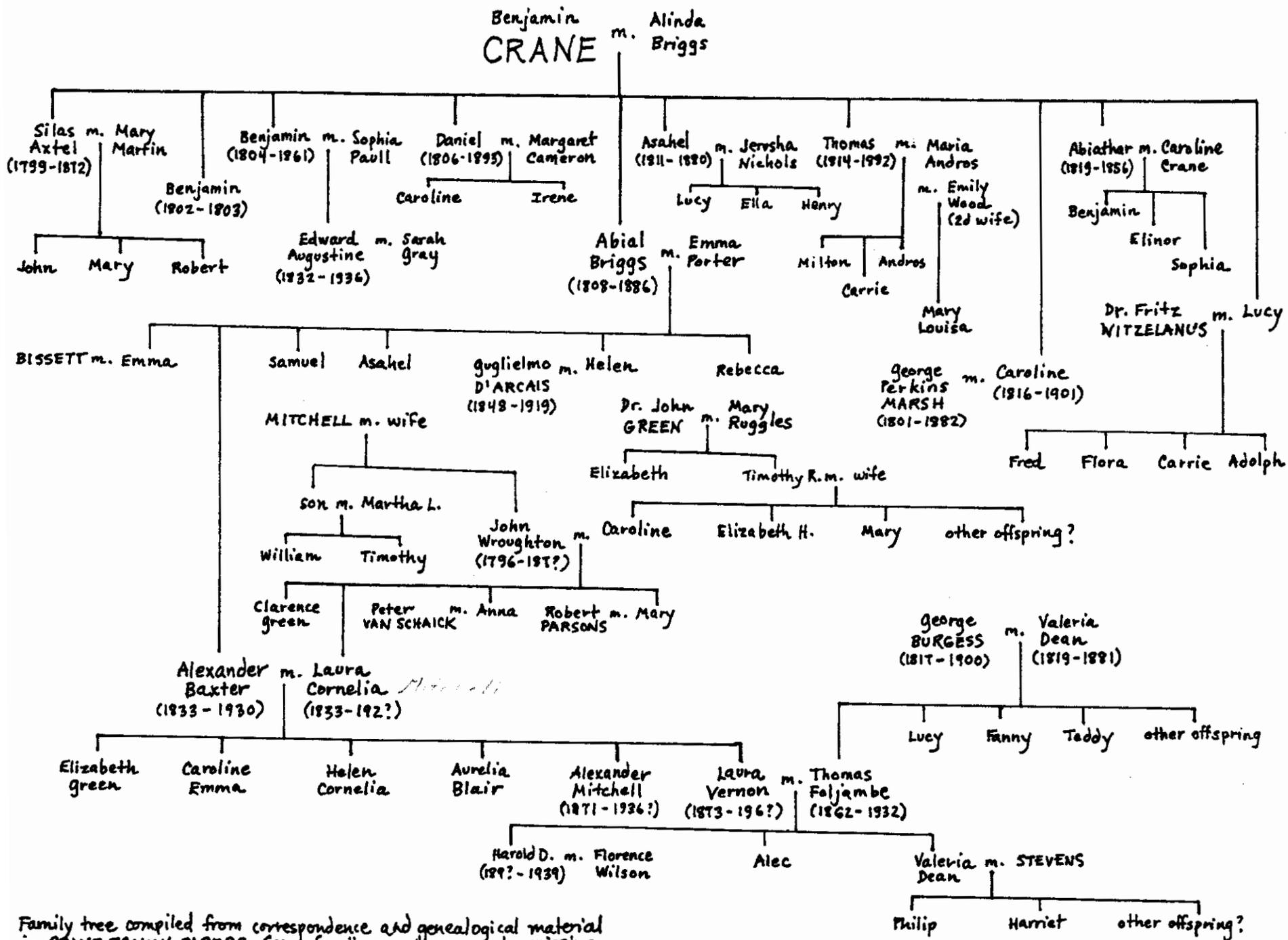
* For further elucidation of family relationships see the attached family tree

CRANE FAMILY PAPERS

Biographical Note / page 2

Alexander had desired that his daughters be acquainted firsthand with European culture, and so they studied in Florence in German schools. Two of them were inspired to take up careers in the arts. Elizabeth became a dramatist and poet, and Helen became a pianist and composer, performing in New York, Germany, and Austria. Alexander and Laura Cornelia visited their children and the Marshes in Italy in 1882. The family vacationed together in Geneva in 1890 and traveled to see Egypt and Palestine in 1897.

Alexander spent the last years of his life in Scarsdale, surrounded by his children and the family of his daughter Laura, who had married Thomas F. Burgess. He died in 1930 at the age of 96.



Family tree compiled from correspondence and genealogical material in CRANE FAMILY PAPERS. Some family members may be missing.

CRANE FAMILY PAPERS

Description

The Crane Family Papers span the years 1819 to 1944, with the bulk falling between 1860 and 1900. They begin with the correspondence of the Mitchell and Green families, from which Laura Cornelia Mitchell Crane descended, and end with that of her daughters. Although the collection is chiefly correspondence, it also includes journals, military records, legal papers, accounts, writings, photographs, and printed matter.

The papers are divided into 19 series, the largest of which is the correspondence of Alexander Baxter (A. B.) Crane and his wife. His letters from the years 1860 to 1865 offer a view of his Civil War experience. Letters to Alexander from his brother Samuel detail the latter's service in the Southwest. These and other incoming and outgoing letters are interfiled in the series chronologically. A separate series is A. B. Crane - Civil War Records, which are his official Union army records. Alexander's later correspondence sheds light on his relationship with his children, with his expatriate cousin Edward A. Crane, and with his family in Berkley, which he in part supported. There is little correspondence that illuminates his legal career, except for a collection of crank mail from Mrs. Dennis (Lucy) McMahon, harrassing Alexander for his defense of Holden and Eldredge.

Family Accounts reveal the considerable wealth of the Crane family, over \$1 million in the 1870s. The legal papers for John W. Mitchell, Elizabeth H. Green, and Peter Van Schaick reveal the wealth of the extended Crane family, including substantial real estate holdings in lower Manhattan. Family photographs range from Civil War cartes-de-visite of Alexander in uniform to photographs of him in his later years with his grandchildren, photographs of his children, of the Berkley Homestead, of Holmhurst, and of the Marshes' Villa Farini in Florence.

Most of the Crane daughters' letters received, arranged chronologically, are of a routine nature. Clippings for Elizabeth and Helen detail the critical reception of their creative work, generally unfavorable for the former, more enthusiastic for the latter. The few letters received by Mary E. Crane, a member of the extended family, are from a Sing Sing prisoner whom she served as a spiritual sponsor. Theron Damon's lively correspondence details life in the expatriate community of Rumelihisari, a suburb of Istanbul, in the 1920s. It is not clear how Damon is related to the Cranes, although one letter mentions a visit from Clarence B. Mitchell, a Miss Mitchell, and a Miss Ruggles. George P. and Caroline Marsh's correspondence - interfiled and arranged chronologically - Mrs. Marsh's journal, and Miss Mitchell's (Laura Cornelia's?) travel journal likewise provide a view of upper-class Americans abroad.

Perhaps most interesting in the Crane Family Papers is Miss R's journal, which details a Christian missionary's visits to the homes of the poor in lower Manhattan. These volumes give a vivid picture of the ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the area and record Miss R's evangelical success in statistics for "hopeful conversions," "backsliders reclaimed," and "young women rescued from vice." It is not clear how Miss R is related to the Cranes. It is believed she is the Miss Robertson of Renwick Street, whose name and address are penciled in the first volume. Elizabeth Green's name is also penciled in on another page of the same volume. The two may have been friends engaged in the same social work.

CRANE FAMILY PAPERS

Container List

Box 1	<u>I. Mitchell, Green & Crane Families - Correspondence, 1819-1851</u>
12	<u>II. Miss Mitchell's Journal, 1860</u> (previously misidentified as Miss Whitehall's Journal)
	<u>III. A. B. Crane (& wife) - Correspondence, 1852-1917, 1929-1930, n.d.</u>
1	1852-1866
2	1867-1879
3	1880-1888
4	1889-1896
5	1897-1902
6	1903-1910
7	1911-1917, 1929-1930, n.d.
8	<u>IV. A. B. Crane - Civil War Records, 1862-1865, 1867, n.d.</u>
8	<u>V. A. B. Crane - Genealogical Material</u>
9	<u>VI. A. B. Crane - Writings</u>
	<u>VII. A. B. Crane - Legal Papers</u>
9	Assorted
10	John W. Mitchell, Elizabeth H. Green, Peter Van Schaick
11	<u>VIII. A. B. Crane - Family Accounts, 1870-1878, n.d.</u>
12	<u>IX. A. B. Crane - Family Photographs, Holmhurst Guest Book</u>
11	<u>X. A. B. Crane - Business References</u>
	<u>XI. Elizabeth Crane - Letters Received, 1877, 1881-1928, 1930-1933, n.d.</u>
Box 13	1877, 1881-1905
14	1906-1918
15	1919-1928, 1930-1933, n.d.

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- XII. Elizabeth Crane - Poetry and Drama
- Box 15 Poetry (including book: Poems)
- 16-17 Drama (including book: Berquin)
- 17 XIII. Elizabeth Crane - Clippings
- 18 XIV. Other Family Correspondence, 1881-1944, n.d.
- Aurelia, Letters Received, 1881-1943
- Caroline, Letters Received, 1889-1919, 1938-1944
- Helen, Letters Received, 1930
- Laura, Letters Received, 1889-1890, 1920, n.d.
- Mary E., Letters Received, 1900
- Others, 1899-1900, n.d.
- Theron Damon, Correspondence, 1921-1922
- 18 XV. Helen Crane - Clippings
- XVI. George P. & Caroline Marsh - Correspondence, 1847-1884, 1889, n.d.
- 18 1847-1867
- 19 1868-1884, 1889, n.d.
- XVII. Caroline Marsh Biographical & Autobiographical Material
- volume Journal, 1861-1864 *(located in unmarked carton)*
- Box 19 Diary, 1878-1879 *between boxes 2 and 4*
- 19 Book: Caroline Crane Marsh: A Life Sketch
- 19 XVIII. George P. & Caroline Marsh - Clippings
- 6 volumes XIX. Miss R's Journal, 1867-1871

CRANE FAMILY PAPERS

Selected List of Letters Received, ~~for Specific Dates see the Letter Catalog in 319~~

AMES, Winthrop
BACON, Henry
BLAIR, John Insley
BOOTH, Newton
BOUTWELL, George S.
BROWN, Francis
BROWN, Samuel Gilman
BRYANT, William Cullen
BERESFORD, Charles W.
CHILDS, George W.
DE PEYSTER, John Watts
DRAKE, Charles D.
EDMUNDS, George F.
EDMUNDS, Susan (Mrs. George F.)
EMERSON, Ralph W.
EYRE, Laurence
FISKE, Harrison Grey
GOODWIN, W.W
GREENSLET, Ferris
GREEN, Andrew H.
HALLOCK, Charles
HOSMER, Harriet G.
KELLY, Edmond
LANGDON, William C.
LATHROP, George Parsons
MARSH, George Perkins
MINGHETTI, Marco
MONTEZ, Lola
MULLER, Mrs. Max (Georgina)
PARK, Edwards A.
PEABODY, George Foster
ROSS, Janet Anne
SCHURZ, Carl
SCHUYLER, Louisa Lee
SICKLES, Daniel
TARKINGTON, Elizabeth Booth
TARKINGTON, John S.
TARKINGTON, Newton Booth
TAYLOR, Bayard
UPTON, Emory
WASHINGTON, Booker T.

CRANE FAMILY PAPERS

Related Collections

NYPL Music Division

Helen C. Crane - Selections

31 folders of ms. music, JPB 83-170

NYPL Manuscripts & Archives Section

Burgess Family Papers

papers of the family into which Laura Vernon Crane married

Dartmouth College

Caroline Crane Marsh - Letters, 1849-1851

11 items that describe Paris, an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, impressions of Turkey, and a trip on the Nile