



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Paul N. Craig letters to Jeannette V. Kelley

1908-1911

MssCol 22940

Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2014

Summary

Creator: Craig, Paul N. (Paul Newton), 1885-1962

Title: Paul N. Craig letters to Jeannette V. Kelley

Date: 1908-1911

Size: .21 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Purchased from Swann Galleries, 2014

Abstract: Paul N. Craig (1885-1962) was an artist, minister, singer and voice teacher who resided in Independence, Missouri for much of his life. Collection consists of letters dating from 1908 to 1911, written by Craig while an art student in New York City to his future wife Jeannette V. Kelley (1887-1978) at Independence. The bulk of the letters date 1908-1909, documenting his training at the New York School of Art (now Parsons The New School for Design) under the tutelage of Frank Alvah Parsons, his boarding life at the YMCA, his exploration of Manhattan's neighborhoods and its cultural offerings, and other outings. Also discussed are his religious beliefs and attendance at services of various denominations, including those of his own faith, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ), in Brooklyn. Letters for 1910-1911 are less frequent, marking his move to an apartment and employment as a commercial artist. His growing affection for New York City and its impact on his faith and character are discussed throughout. Letters are annotated in pencil with dates matching envelope postmarks. Some musical and church programs, along with a small sketch of Craig with a toothache, are included in the letters.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Paul N. Craig letters to Jeannette V. Kelley, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2014

Creator History

Paul N. Craig (1885-1962) was an artist, minister, singer and voice teacher who resided in Independence, Missouri for much of his life. In 1912 he married Jeannette V. Kelley of Independence,

pianist and daughter of Bishop Edmund L. Kelley of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Craig became a minister of that faith and was for several years pastor of a church in Kansas City. A noted singer, he and his wife returned to Independence in the 1920s to work as music teachers.

Scope and Content Note

Collection consists of letters dating from 1908 to 1911, written by Craig while an art student in New York City to his future wife Jeannette V. Kelley at Independence, Missouri.

The bulk of the letters date 1908-1909, documenting his training at the New York School of Art (now Parsons The New School for Design) under the tutelage of Frank Alvah Parsons, his boarding life at the YMCA, his exploration of Manhattan's neighborhoods and its cultural offerings, and other outings. Also discussed are his religious beliefs and attendance at services of various denominations, including those of his own faith, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ), in Brooklyn.

Letters begin with an account of his first day in the City (postmarked 1908 October 1), when he rides the subway for the first time, enrolls at school, and finds a home at the YMCA on East 86th Street, soon making his first visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1908 October 12). He recounts his student life at the New York School of Art, which he left in the Spring of 1909, describing class assignments and personal guidance by his teacher Frank Alvah Parsons, and his impression of other teachers such as Robert Henri. Taking Parsons' advice to spend time strolling the City to improve his observational skills, he explores Chinatown and the Lower East Side (1908 November), and visits the Tombs prison and Juvenile Court (1908 November 16 and 23). Letters mention his favorite restaurants, walks through Central Park, photographing the Brooklyn Bridge from a nearby tower on New Year's Day (1909 January 4), and other outings. Attendance at church services, concerts and his own musical activities are also described.

Letters from 1910-1911 are less frequent, marking his move to an apartment and employment as a commercial artist. His growing affection for New York City and its impact on his faith and character are discussed throughout, leading to his hope that Jeannette will join him in New York to study music. Letters are annotated in pencil with dates matching envelope postmarks. Some musical and church programs, along with a small sketch of Craig with a toothache (1908 October 12), are included in the letters.

Key Terms

Subjects

Art -- Study and teaching
Art schools -- New York (State) -- New York

Occupations

Artists
Clergy
Singers

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Love letters
Programs (documents)
Sketches

Geographic Names

New York (N.Y.) -- Description and travel
New York (N.Y.) -- Religious life and customs -- 20th century
New York (N.Y.) -- Social life and customs -- 20th century

Names

Craig, Paul N. (Paul Newton), 1885-1962
Kelley, Jeannette V., 1887-1978 -- recipient
Parsons, Frank Alvah, 1868-1930
New York School of Art
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
Young Men's Christian Association of the City of New York