

AMON CARTER MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART ARCHIVES COLLECTION GUIDE

Collection Summary

- Title:** Sarah Ann Hardinge Family Papers
- Date:** 1836–1984, bulk dates 1870s–1900s
- Creator(s):** Hardinge, Sarah Ann Lillie (1824–1913)
- Extent:** 5.8 linear feet
- Code:** SAH
- Repository:** Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives
- Abstract:** The Sarah Ann Hardinge Family Papers include correspondence, legal documents, maps, and newspaper clippings from Hardinge's years in Texas and after. They provide insight into life in Texas shortly after its separation from Mexico and before the Civil War, particularly the rough and tumble struggle of settlers to claim land and establish livelihoods. The papers were given to the museum by Hardinge's descendants as an addition to the watercolors she painted, also owned by the Museum.

Information for Researchers

Access Restrictions

The collection is open to qualified researchers.

Use Restrictions

The Sarah Ann Harding Family Papers are the physical property of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. The Amon Carter Museum of American Art assumes no responsibility for infringement of literary property rights or copyrights or for liability to any person for defamation or invasion of privacy.

Preferred Citation

Sarah Ann Hardinge Family Papers, [item identification], Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives.

Related Collections in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives

None

Related Collections in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art

19 watercolors and a daguerreotype are in the art collection.

Contact the museum archivist at archivist@cartermuseum.org or 817.989.5077 for additional information.

Administrative Information

Acquisition and Custody Information

Gift of H. Deforest Hardinge and Family [Papers]

Gift of Natalie K. Shastid [Journal]

Processed By

Jonathan Frembling

Biographical Note

Sarah Ann Lillie Bumstead was born on March 23, 1824, the youngest of nineteen children. She pursued the interests of a middle class New England woman, including drawing and painting. Of her siblings she was closest to her brother, Edward Dorr Griffin. They corresponded regularly as he traveled to Texas, Havana, Cuba, then the California gold fields, practicing medicine and seeking his fortune. In July of 1850 she received word that Edward had died from typhoid fever.

On November 14, 1851, Sarah married the Englishman that had been courting her for two years, George Hardinge, and they settled in Brooklyn, New York. Soon, however, they began pursuing the land claims left to her by her brother Edward, which he earned for his service with Colonel James Fannin Jr. at the battle of Goliad. They ultimately decided to sail to Galveston, Texas and travel inland to their claim.

She was 28 when they set sail, recently married and pregnant, leaving behind a middle class New England life. The couple settled briefly in several places, moving as their claims and attempts to sell Sarah's inheritance failed. They had ongoing difficulties with land agents, such as Jacob de Cordoba, and unreliable lawyers. Finally, George, a lawyer by training, took matters on personally, and Sarah taught school to bring in a modest income.

By March of 1856, Sarah had borne three sons, survived Indian scares, and suffered through frequent absences of her husband who had proven to be an alcoholic spendthrift. The couple conceded defeat and was forced to return to her family in New England. Sarah divorced George in 1865, citing desertion as the cause. She patented a photo finishing process called "Pearletta Pictures" and earned her living from its sales.

Sarah continued her unsuccessful efforts to win her western claims until her death in 1913. During her time in Texas, she turned her artistic talents to recording her experiences through watercolors and journals. These form a unique, irreplaceable visual and written history of early Texas life.

Scope and Content Note

The Sarah Ann Hardinge Family Papers contain correspondence, original artworks, published materials including articles and reproductions, and ephemera. The material is divided by physical form. Oversized items are housed separately. Contents are arranged chronologically. Undated material follows dated material. Published material was copied and left in its original order.

Papers: A diverse collection of correspondence and legal documents primarily relating to Hardinge's land claims.

Artworks: Consists primarily of artworks executed by Hardinge. These are mostly watercolors and oils on board, with a handful of photographs. The series includes examples of Hardinge's "Pearletta Pictures," a system she developed of overpainting photographs. The artworks are fragile and suffered mold damage in many cases, requiring special care when handling.

A more detailed series description appears at the start of each series in this finding aid.

Inventory

Series I. Papers

Scope and Content Note: The majority of this series consists of correspondence and legal documents. The bulk of items relate to Hardinge's land claims but also include notable examples of family letters, her early Texas writings, and her journal from the return trip to New York. The earliest correspondence is from her brother Edward Bumstead, and the latter correspondence is from her descendants.

Box 1, Folder 1: July 4, 1836–December 8, 1836.

Box 1, Folder 2: February 24, 1837.

Box 1, Folder 3: May 5, 1841.

Box 1, Folder 4: October 24, 1845–December 29, 1845.

Box 1, Folder 5: February 3, 1846–November 10, [1846].

Box 1, Folder 6: October 5, 1847–November 7, 1847.

Box 1, Folder 7: June 8, 1848–November 13, 1848.

Box 1, Folder 8: February 10, 1849–February 24, 1849.

Box 1, Folder 9: January 24, 1850.

Box 1, Folder 10: April 17, 1851.

Box 1, Folder 11: August 20, 1852–December 4, 1852.

Box 1, Folder 12: January 6, 1853–June 24, 1853.

Box 1, Folder 13: January 12, 1854–December 17, 1854.

Box 1, Folder 14: March 6, 1855–December 24, 1855, n.d.

Box 1, Folder 15: June 4, 1857.

Box 1, Folder 16: October 4, 1859.

Box 1, Folder 17: March 8, 1860–April 2, 1860.

Box 1, Folder 18: April 27, 1861, n.d.

Box 1, Folder 19: May 16, 1872–June 29, 1872.

Box 1, Folder 20: [January 14, 1878]–November 29, 1878.

Box 1, Folder 21: August 31, 1881.

Box 1, Folder 22: April 10, 1887–May 26, 1887.

Box 1, Folder 23: June 1, 1887–June 28, 1887.

Box 1, Folder 24: July 8, 1887–July 29, 1887.

Box 1, Folder 25: August 3, 1887–August 26, 1887.

Box 1, Folder 26: September 2, 1887–October 19, 1887.

Box 1, Folder 27: November 11, 1887–December 8, 1887, n.d.

Box 1, Folder 28: January 3, 1888–July 20, 1888.

Box 1, Folder 29: August 1, 1888–December 30, 1888.

Box 1, Folder 30: February 8, 1889–May 22, 1889.

Box 1, Folder 31: June 7, 1889–September 28, 1889.

Box 1, Folder 32: October 5, 1889–December 28, 1889.

Box 2, Folder 1: January 2, 1890–March 31, 1890.

Box 2, Folder 2: April 17, 1890–May 17, 1890.

Box 2, Folder 3: June 2, 1890–December 5, 1890.

Box 2, Folder 4: January 4, 1891–November 8, 1891.

Box 2, Folder 5: January 14, 1892–June 15, 1892.

Box 2, Folder 6: October 30, 1893–November 14, 1893.

Box 2, Folder 7: May 5, 1894–October 13, 1894.

Box 2, Folder 8: May 6, 1895–November 23, 1895.

Box 2, Folder 9: February 26, 1896–March 16, 1896, n.d.

Box 2, Folder 10: June 12, 1900.

Box 2, Folder 11: *Decatur Herald*. January 10, 1904.

Box 2, Folder 12: August 28, 1911–September 1, 1911.

Box 2, Folder 13: March 31, 1913–May 12, 1913.

Box 2, Folder 14: June 2, 1913–December 18, 1913.

Box 2, Folder 15: January 23, 1914–January 29, 1914.

Box 2, Folder 16: April 19, 1917–July 24, 1917.

Box 2, Folder 17: May 3, 1919–May 27, 1919.

Box 2, Folder 18: May 4, 1927–June 10, 1927.

Box 2, Folder 19: June 28, 1931–September 29, 1931.

Box 2, Folder 20: September 21, 1932.

Box 2, Folder 21: December 12, 1938.

Box 2, Folder 22: Envelope. n.d.

Box 2, Folder 23: August 1, 1942–October 2, 1942, n.d.

Box 2, Folder 24: Inventory and Business Cards. n.d.

Box 2, Folder 25: Archives and Records Division, Texas General Land Office. n.d.

Box 2, Folder 26: *Rand McNally Standard Map of Texas*. n.d.

Box 3, Item 1: *Journal*. 1856.

Box 3, Item 2: Red Leather Pouch. November 12, 1941.

Box 3, Folder 3: February 12, 1832–March 29, 1839.

Box 3, Folder 4: July 6, 1841–March 15, 1846.

Box 3, Folder 5: May 1853–November 27, 1855.

Box 3, Folder 6: *A Geographically Correct County Map of States Traversed by the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway and Its Connections*. [1878].

Box 3, Folder 7: Power of Attorney. June 23, 1887.

Box 3, Folder 8: September 18, 1894.

Box 3, Folder 9: Clippings. April 27, 1882–February 15, 1904, n.d.

Box 3, Folder 10: “Answers to Interrogatories.” n.d.

Box 3, Folder 11: *Heirs to Texas Lands*. n.d.

Box 3, Folder 12: *Plan of a Tract of Land Situated in the State of Texas*. n.d.

Box 3, Folder 13: Wrapping Paper. n.d.

Series II. Artworks

Scope and Content Note: Collection includes a variety of formats, primarily oversized and suffering from mold damage; includes watercolors, oils on board, photographs, decorative arts items, and framed items. The works were executed after Hardinge’s time in Texas and cover a variety of primarily domestic and decorative themes. This series is housed separately due to size and condition.

Box 4–Box 6.