

George W. Clayton Collection

Mss.00121

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Summary Information

Repository	History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center
Creator	Clayton, George W., (George Washington), 1833-1899
Creator	Jones, Anna E., b. 1840
Creator	Jones, William, 1828-1901
Title	George W. Clayton Collection
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1850-1915
Date [inclusive]	1798-1989
Extent	2.5 Linear feet + 3 Flat Boxes (16x20)
Language	English
Archival Material [Linear-Feet]	2.5 lf + 3 flat boxes
Abstract	<p>George Washington "Wash" Clayton (February 22, 1833-August 15, 1899) grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Moving to the West to find fame and fortune, Wash built a mercantile store in Kansas Territory and Denver, Colorado, providing miners with supplies. Establishing himself as a prominent business man, Wash became involved in politics related to banking institutions, orphanages, railroads and utilities, and social clubs. Wash left his legacy in Colorado by leaving his estate to the founding of the Clayton College for Boys (1911), focusing their programs on white orphaned boys from prominent Colorado families. In 1967, the school reevaluated their student body and opened their school to all orphans. There are approximately 2,200 pages of correspondence, legal records,</p>

photographs and other materials relating to the life of George Washington Clayton and some of his family members.

Preferred Citation note

Cite as: George W. Clayton Collection (Mss.00121), History Colorado.

Biographical note

On February 22, 1833, George Washington Clayton was born in Philadelphia to Curtis and Margaret Clayton, Sr. Clayton would become the benefactor of the George "Wash" Clayton Trust and College.

Clayton spent his first twenty-two years as an apprentice at his father's shoe store. After learning his craft, Wash left his family and friends in Philadelphia to join his cousin Powell in December 1855. The cousins traveled to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory to begin a mercantile business. William Jones, brother-in-law to William Clayton, joins Wash in Leavenworth and later in Denver. In July 1859 Wash and his two partners-Percival Lowe and Jerry Kershaw- moved to Denver to open a new store.

Wash arrived in Denver late July with six four-mule teams carrying supplies for the store. The three men established their first merchantile renting a store from "Mort" Fisher on Blake Street, between 15th and 16th. At this location, one side of the store was Ryan Morehead & Co. (selling groceries) and the other side Clayton, Lowe & Co. (selling clothing, boot shoes and miners goods). This initial venture included around 6 men living at the back of the store to see if the venture might work. The next step was to acquire more supplies and a new location. Clayton went for the supplies and Lowe purchased for them General W. H. Larimer's home corner, two lots with his log cabin, on the corner of Larimer and 15th. Here Lowe built the first frame store in Denver. The store had a brick foundation (by Sam Howe) and a brick fireplace and chimney--the first good burnt brick work in Denver. Lowe also purchases property at Blake Street in April 1860 from General Larimer as well as a site at 15th and Laramier. In 1861, William, Wash's older brother, bought out Percival Lowe, moving his wife Catherine, sister of William Jones, to Denver. Fire destroys the business in 1863— the brother's build a new store at Larimer and F. Streets.

On September 12, 1860, George married Letitia Emma Myers of Philadelphia. The couple built a house and began a family once returning to Denver. In June 1861 Wash's son, Powell, was born. When returning from a business trip to Philadelphia, Wash learned of his infant son's death. Six months later, Wash traveled to Philadelphia again and return to find his wife, Letitia, had passed away. Wash buried Powell and Letitia in Philadelphia.

Returning to Colorado and his business, Wash and William Clayton accepted titles to land lots to settle outstanding accounts for their store in Denver, Colorado. As their titles gained profit, the two brothers turned their attention to real-estate in Denver and elsewhere. In 1882 construction on a new office complex was completed on 15th and Larimer in Denver, replacing the original store on Blake Street. This store, the Graham-Clayton Granite Block, was built for McNamara's Dry Good Store (1882-1887). For the Granite Block, the Clayton brothers hired Biscoe & Hewitt Architects using stone and wood from Colorado.

As the Clayton's gained prestige in Denver as business men they became involved with Denver entrepreneurs such as Walter Cheesman, David Moffat, and Judge Moses Hallett. At this time, their involvement in Denver politics grew as well. Wash in particular became involved with Denver banking institutions, orphanages, railroads and utilities, and social clubs. William M. Clayton was elected mayor of Denver from 1868-1869.

Around 1875, Catherine's sister, Anna E. Jones (Aunt Annie) began a cow business at her brother-in-law's house (William Clayton) on Tremont Street. Aunt Annie provided milk and butter with hired help for the house.

After William's term in office he returned to Philadelphia to recuperate from an illness. While in Philadelphia, William passed away on October 10, 1892. After his death, his wife Catherine and children live the remainder of their lives in Philadelphia with their family.

Prior to the death of William, Wash lost his Father, Curtis Clayton Sr. on April 25, 1890. At this time, Wash revised his current will to focus on establishing the Clayton College for Boys. Wash lived through the Economic Panic of 1893 but his business was not affected.

On August 15, 1899, George Washington Clayton was found dead at his desk from apoplexy. In his revised will, Wash left his estate for the establishment of a college in Denver for orphaned white boys from reputable families modeled after Stephen Girard's school for boys in Pennsylvania. In his will, he left specific instructions as to his wishes for the college.

In the summer of 1909 work began on the George W. Clayton College when the City of Denver took control of Wash's estate as deemed in his will. The College was built by the architects Biscoe & Hewitt. Two years later, 1911, the college was opened in Denver. In 1966 the regulations for students attending the college were altered opening the school to all orphans. Clayton College has progressed to meet the needs of children, bringing new programs to the college through The Clayton Foundation. The mission of the school has not changed providing additional programs and services for children in Colorado.

George W. Clayton chronology

1833	February 22: George Washington Clayton is born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Curtis and Margaret Clayton.
1855	December: George leaves Philadelphia for Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory to set up a general store with his cousin, Powell Clayton.
1859	George travels to Denver City to open a general store.
1860	September 12: George marries Letitia Emma Myers in Philadelphia and brings her to Denver.
1861	George's brother, William, buys out his partners and begins his long partnership with George. June: Powell Clayton is born to George and Letitia Clayton.

	August: George and Letitia's infant son, Powell, dies.
1862	March 18: Letitia Emma Clayton dies.
1868-1869	William M. Clayton is mayor of Denver.
1869-1874	George Clayton serves as Vice President of the First National Bank of Denver.
1879	George Clayton serves as receiver for the newly formed Denver Pacific Railroad.
1880-1881	George Clayton serves as director of the Denver Club, a businessman's club.
1882	George and William Clayton build the Granit uilding at Fifteenth and Larimer Streets.
1892	March: George Calyton revises his 1884 Will to focus more on the foudnig of Calyton College for Boys.
1899	August 15: George Washington Clayton dies leaving an estate worth approximately \$2,000,000.
1904	Judge Moses Hallet, George's close friend, takes charge of the estate.
1909	August 15: The City and County of Denver receives the deeds to the Clayton estate. September 18: The cornerstone of the Administration Building is laid and work officially begins on the Clayton College for Boys.
1911	The Clayton College for Boys opens.
1947	A surevey of Clayton College is done by the Denver City Survey Staff which includes recommendations for modernization of the facilities.
1948	Clayton land is sold for Stapleton airfield.
1966	The Probate Court is petitioned for removal fo the racial restrictions from the Clayton Will.
1967	Clayton College for Boys opens its school to all races; provision banning non-white boys is stricken.
1984	June: Denver Probate Judge allows new governing board for Clayton College.

1986	Spring: The Clayton Foundation begins its Intensive Learning Program and Institute for the Arts.
1987	Clayton College opens its doors to at-risk children. September: Clayton Foundation sells Park Hill Golf Course.
1988	March: Clayton Foundation begins the Clayton Family Preservation Program to help strengthen the family system. July: The Clayton College Residential Child Care Facility is officially closed; other programs continue to impact the community.

Scope and Contents note

There are approximately 2,200 pages of correspondence, legal records, photographs, newspaper clippings, books, and financial records relating to the Clayton College, George Clayton, his estate and some of his family member.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center

Conditions Governing Use note

Open to researchers without restrictions.

Provenance

The majority of the collection is from the estate of George Washington Clayton and loaned to the historical society in 1948. The loan was made a gift in 1963. Additional items in the collection were donated by Edna Haydock, daughter of Letitia Jones and Samuel Kennedy, in 1968.

Processing Information note

Processed by Haley Suby, December 2014.

Related Materials

Related Material Note

The George W. Clayton Collection is part of the larger donation of material that includes artifacts. There are numerous accession numbers. See attached resercher report for George W. Clayton related materials. Please contact the Research Center staff for more information.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Biscoe & Hewitt .
- Clayton College. (Denver, Colo.)

Genre(s)

- Bible.
- Business cards
- Death certificates
- Financial records.
- Flyers, Advertising
- Indentures
- Marriage certificates
- Marriage licenses.
- Newspaper clippings.
- Passports.

Geographic Name(s)

- Denver (Colo.)
- Kansas Territory
- Paris (France)
- Yellowstone National Park

Occupation(s)

- Merchants

Personal Name(s)

- Clayton, Curtis, Sr., 1799-1890
- Clayton, George W., (George Washington), 1833-1899
- Clayton, Letitia, d. 1862
- Clayton, Powell, 1833-1914
- Clayton, William M., 1824-1892
- Kershaw, Jerry
- Lowe, Percival G., (Percival Green), 1828-1908
- Roeschlaub, Robert Sawers, 1843-1923

Subject(s)

- Birth Certificates.
- Boys and Girls Clubs of America
- Buildings--Specifications.
- Business--Denver--Colorado
- Cattle--Breeding.
- Colorado--Description and Travel.
- Dry-goods
- Orphans.
- Poetry.
- Potawatomi Tribe
- Shawnee Nation
- Tourism.

Accession number

This collection contains numerous accession numbers. See individual file folders.

Collection Inventory

Biographical 1798-1931 20.0 File folder(s)

FF1 Genealogical Notes Undated

Scope and Contents note

Handwritten notes made by Miss Anna E. Jones, sister of Catherine Jones married to William M. Clayton.

FF2 Birth Records 1798-1841

Processing Information note

The genealogy was removed from the Clayton Family Bible. The rest of the Bible has not been found.

Flat-Box

FF3 Marriage License & Announcements 1852, 1860

Box 7

FF4 Death Certificates 1857, 1862, 1887, 1905

FF5 Funeral Announcements June 2, 1879-Dec. 16, 1899, Undated

FF6 Copy of George Clayton & Steven Girard, Esq. Will Dec. 31, 1831, March 2, 1892

FF7 Estate of William M. Clayton & James Archer 1882-1884, 1893-1898

Flat-Box

Box 7

FF8 Estate Ledger 1900-1902

FF9 Checkbook of G.W. Clayton Estate 1903-1904

FF10 Rent Accounts of G.W. Clayton Estate 1905-1908

FF11 Franklin Lodge & Masons 1855, 1873

Accession number

catalogue number: H.B.4.1.1.28; Assession number: H.3724

FF12 Correspondence to William Jones from Letitia Jones Oct. 3, 1858, Sept. 18, 1860

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Donated by Edna Haydock, daughter of Letitia Jones who is the sister-in-law of William M. Clayton.

Scope and Contents note

Correspondence written in response by William Jones, brother to Catherine Jones wife of William M. Clayton, to younger sister Letitia Jones. Letters contain information about William Jones's time at Wash's store in Leavenworth, Kansas, assisting with government payments to Native Americans who have treaties with the United States Government, and his first impressions of Denver, Colorado.

FF13 Prescriptions June-Aug. 1899, Undated

FF14 Anna E. Jones School Book & Record of Cattle [1789-1863], 1881-1895

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Biographical

Donated by Edna Haydock, daughter of Letitia Jones who is the sister-in-law of William M. Clayton.

Scope and Contents note

Details of school work related to presidents and state history. Records of cattle detailing milk, butter, and livestock. Kept at the house of William and Catherine Clayton at 1307 Tremont St., Denver, Colo.

FF15 Poetry Book [1899]

FF16 Family Bibles 1867, Undated

Accession number

catalogue number: H.D.1.3.5; Accession number: H.3671 and Catalogue number: H.D.1.1.3.6,
Accession number: H.3672

FF17 Yellowstone National Park Summer Tourist Ticket Aug. 1886

Flat-Box

FF18 Passports 1873; June 12, 1890

Box 7

Accession number

Catalogue number: H.A.6.4.9.30; accession number: H.3670

FF19 Clayton Estate Journal 1906

FF20 Newspaper Clippings & Gov. Gilpin Invitation Sept. 27, 1861, 1899-1912, Aug. 20, 1931,
Undated

Clayton Whole Sale & Dry Goods Store

Clayton Whole Sale & Dry Goods Store 1854-1905 23.0 File folder(s)

Flat-Box

FF21 Palmer & Clayton Advertisement 1848

Box 7

FF22 Kansas Territory Land Grant May 6, 1854

Catalogue number

Catalogue number: H.A.8.3.1.1

FF23 Kansas Territory Store Business Card [1858-1859]

FF24 Account Book 1856-1863

Scope and Contents note

Accounts from Leavenworth, Kansas store and first store in Denver, Colorado.

Flat-Box

FF25 Colorado Land Grant 1860

Box 7

Catalogue number

Catalogue number: H.A.8.3.1.1

FF26 Deed of Real-Estate & Quit Claim 1860-1903

Catalogue number

Clayton Whole Sale & Dry Goods Store

Catalogue number: H.A.8.3.2.1

FF27 Financial Records 1861-1890

Flat-Box

FF28 Trial Balance Book 1860-1861

Box 7

FF29 Abstract of Title Ledger 1861

Box 8

Map-case

FF30 Denver Store Advertisemnet 1862

oversized
FF 30

FF31 Daybook 1864-1889

FF32 Sale Book 1869

FF33 Ledger & Invoice Book 1861-1892

Flat-Box

FF34 Ledger, 1864-1913 1864-1913

Box 8

FF35 Ledger, 1889-1912 1889-1912

Box 9

FF36 Ledger Balance Book, 1865-1889 1865-1889

FF37 Ledger Balance Book, 1867-1869 1867-1869

FF38 Cash Book 1871-1899

FF39 Correspondence and Papers for Graham-Clayton Building 1891-1902

Scope and Contents note

The Granite Block building is located in Larmier Square at 1460 Larimer Street, Denver, Colorado. Built by George W. and William M. Clayton as the McNamara Dry Goods Store in 1882. In 1887 the McNamara Dry Goods store left the building converting it into an office complex.

FF40 Estate Journal 1905

FF41 Grocery Panic Prices News Clipping [1894]

FF42 Dole Hawaiian Pineapple Resident Agent List Undated

FF43 Name Cards & Memos Undated

Clayton College for Boys 1900-1989 5.0 File folder(s)

FF44 Floor Plan & Contract Correspondence 1900, Undated

FF45 Building Specifications for Clayton College, Biscoe & Hewitt 1910

FF46 Indenture Agreements 1911, 1912

Catalogue number

Catalogue number: H.B.3.1.1.36-45

News Clippings

Scope and Contents note

Four of the indentures are of the first students at Clayton College. The article "Clayton College for Boys has 7 Occupants and 4 Applicants" in FF49 refers to these students.

FF47 Annual Reports 1912, 1913, 1936, 1989

FF48 Charter, Boys & Girls Club of Colorado Undated

FF49 News Clippings 1899, 1910-[1914]

News Clippings

FF50 George W. Clayton Estate 1899-1912

FF51 General Undated