

Anne Meech; Sanford and Susan Meech; Susan Spicer

An Archive of Papers from the Meech Family of St. Louis and Connecticut, including letters documenting Anne Meech's overland travel from Lake Erie to California in 1896

(St. Louis, Missouri; North Temescal, California; Groton, Connecticut: 1858-1896)

\$2800

An archive of family papers from the estate of Captain Sanford Meech in Groton, Connecticut, dating from 1858-96. The collection includes seven holograph letters written by Anne Meech, in which she describes her overland travel during the summer of 1896 from Lake Erie to North Temescal, California, including her side trips to Yellowstone Park, and the newly completed Sutro Baths at San Francisco.

Born in 1861 to Susan Spicer and Noyes Billing Meech, a prosperous wholesale paper and book merchant in St. Louis, Anne was the eldest of three children, Susan and Sanford. All three eventually settled in Groton, Connecticut, with Sanford becoming captain of a merchant ship on Long Island Sound.

The collection also includes letters and documents dating from 1858-66 relating to Noyes B. Meech's business activities in St. Louis; personal letters between Anne, Susan, Sanford, and their mother Susan Spicer dating from circa 1880-95; and one of Sanford's shipboard journals from the mid-1880s.



There is a carte de visite portrait of Anne Meech, who never married, among her letters from 1896. At Yellowstone she describes several sites and attends lectures given by John Stoddard. On the last leg of her trip through Portland, Oregon, she describes riding: “on the electric cars to the Heights,” where she encounters a party of five Japanese girls and their American escort:

“... Mrs. Hyde, one of the ladies from the car, said she believed those girls were being taken to San Francisco for fancy women, she says that is the custom here. The matron at the railway station said they were going to be sent back to their own home & country, that they had come over here on their own accord & had not a friend or relative over here. They came through on the same train with us ...”

An historically important archive of letters written by an independent Connecticut woman, together with additional letters and documents from her siblings and parents in St. Louis.

A detailed list, with additional excerpts, follows:

I. Rufus Fitch and Noyes Billing Meech: 3 letters and 2 documents, 1858-66

Three holograph letters from Fitch to his Uncle (Noyes Billing Meech), 1860-66; together with two related manuscript ledger sheets, 1858-60. Sanford Meech's father, Noyes Billing Meech was a wholesale paper and book merchant based in St. Louis: all three letters were posted from St. Louis: they relate to business partnerships between the two men. The two ledger sheets give financial information about their shared stock holdings and related accounts. The three holograph letters are dated: September 14, 1860; December 23, 1861; November 2, 1866.

II. Miscellaneous family letters, circa 1880-88

Five holograph letters by Susan Spicer, Anne, and Susie, including one posted from Mt. Holyoke Seminary in Massachusetts.

III. Miscellaneous family letters, circa 1892-95

Five holograph letters.

IV. Sanford Meech's shipboard journal and ledger, circa 1886-87

Small quarto. Consists of 4pp. of daily narrative entries of a passage between New London and Stonington, Connecticut: (Monday [March] 8 – 22); and 3pp. of column entries listing: type of cargo (P. Iron, stone, scrap), weight (in tons), etc.; shipping and discharging ports (mostly Connecticut and New York coastal ports). Lacking covers, else very good.

V. Letters by Anne Meech, re: overland trip to California, June-July, 1896

One portrait photograph of Anne Meech and seven holograph letters posted to her mother and sister, giving an account of her travel from Lake Erie to North Temescal. Anne Meech is single, and is traveling with: "Augustus, his wife and baby; Clara and Annie".

Carte de visite. Portrait of Anne Meech. Giles Bishop, Photographer, New London, CT.

1. Autograph Post Card. Steamer Northland [?]: June 16 [1896].

In pencil. Written on a Steamer crossing Lake Erie, and posted from Detroit.

2. ALS. Octavo. 8pp. Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, Yellowstone Park, Wyoming: June 22, 1896. In pencil: "... The ride through Dakota and Montana was weird and strange. For miles and miles there was not a tree ... immense sand dunes ... some parts ... looked like picture of Jerusalem ..." Anne also describes traveling in a sleeping car and meeting three ladies: a county superintendent of schools in Montana, a missionary and her daughter.

3. ALS. Octavo. 6pp. Fountain Geyser Basin Hotel, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming: June 24, 1896. In ink. Anne describes geysers and other sites that she visited at Yellowstone ... attends lectures by John L. Stoddard.

4. ALS. Octavo. 10pp. North Temescal, Alameda County: July 3, 1896

In pencil. Anne describes the last part of their trip via Spokane and Portland, Oregon. At Portland they lay over at the Hotel Perkins and take a ride “on the electric cars to the Heights ...” where they join a party consisting of a man who was escorting five Japanese girls and climb on foot further up the Heights. The Japanese girls were: “forever tripping and stumbling and turning their ankles ... Mrs. Hyde, one of the ladies from the car, said she believed those girls were being taken to San Francisco for fancy women, she says that is the custom here. The matron at the railway station said they were going to be sent back to their own home & country, that they had come over here on their own accord & had not a friend or relative over here. They came through on the same train with us ...”

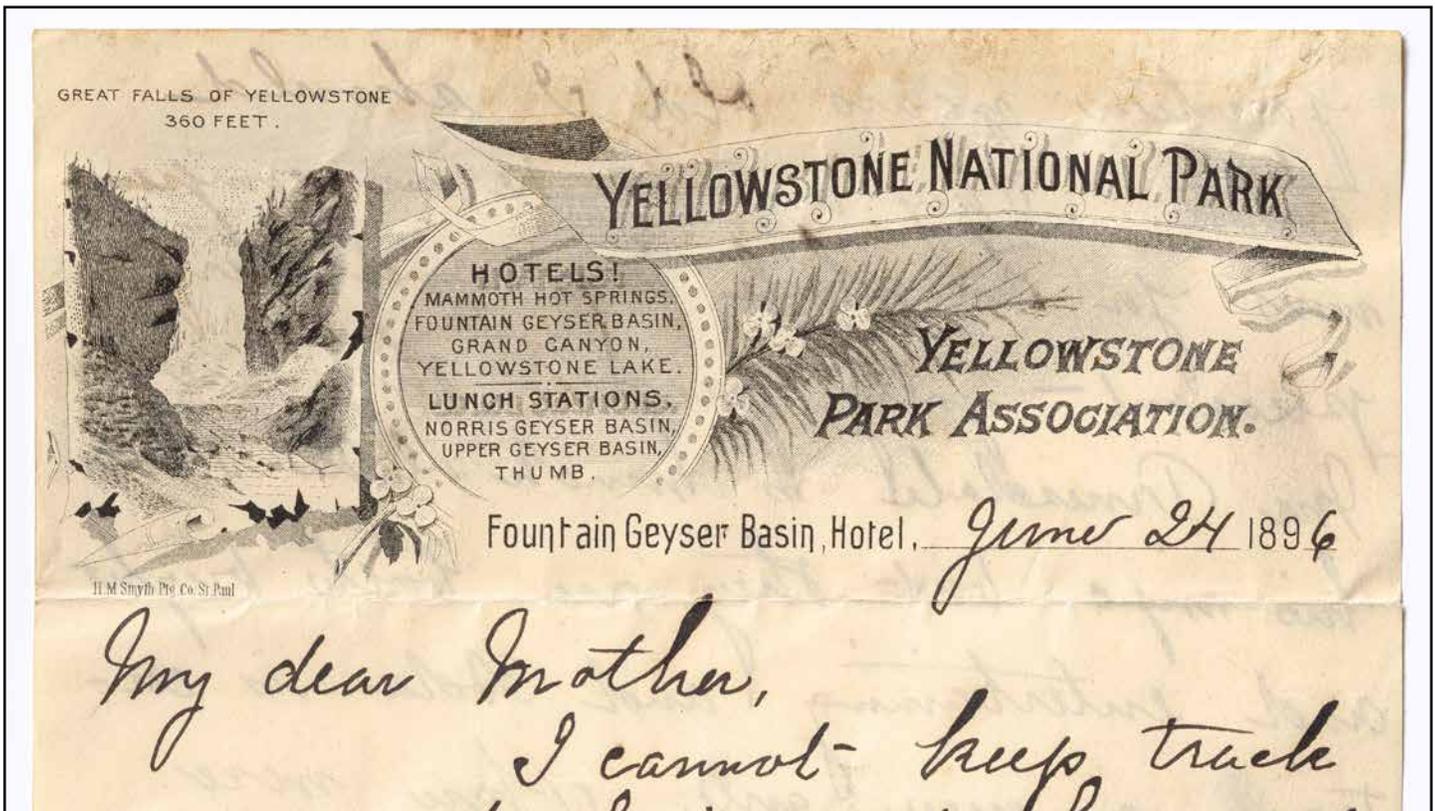
5. ALS. Octavo. 4pp. North Temescal, Alameda Co. Cal., July 26, 1896

In ink. Ann describes her stay with “Maria” and her family in North Temescal; notes that they will soon be returning home to Connecticut, and will be visiting San Francisco tomorrow.

6. ALS. Octavo. 6pp. North Temescal, Alameda Co. Cal., July 29, 1896

In ink. Anne describes her visit to Cliff house and the Sutro Baths: “... at the Cliff House we had a fine time although the seals did not show up so numerous as usual ... when we went into the Sutro Baths I found another fascinating spot from which we most reluctantly tore ourselves away. It is a magnificent building with beautiful plants, several swimming pools, and a museum of things well worth looking at ...” They also visit friends who are doctors at the Children’s Hospital in San Francisco.

7. ALS. Octavo. 4pp. N. Temescal, July 29, 1896. In ink. [BTC#437852]



N. Tennesseal, July 27, 1896.
My dear Susan,

This week has been so full of dissipation that my feet could not talk to you until tonight. Of course Ann has told you that the daily excitement for the mail at 5:30 P.M. and Sundays. It seems as though the post office is no better than inington, no mail



N. Tennesseal
Blamada Co. Cal.
Sunday evening 26 July '96

My dear Susan,
I looked for a letter from you yesterday and Ann and I went to the office hoping to find the dear old familiar blue envelope but were disappointed. This morning when church was over Dick took hold of arms and said "Let's hurry home ahead of the others and stand the 2nd of



Miss Susan B. French
Boston
Conn.

Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel
Yellowstone Park Wyoming
Monday June 22, 1896

My dear Mother,
I have paused in the midst of packing for a fresh start early tomorrow morning to write a few words to you. We arrived here this afternoon and have done up the Mammoth Hot Springs, the White Elephant and the Orange Squiser. I am pretty tired but otherwise I feel well. We spent a very pleasant evening in Duluth signing our tickets, and doing a little shopping had my dinner and took the 10 o'clock train for Staples. We were given seats and a sleeper, but had to change into another at Staples. But's much

North Tennesseal
Blamada Co. Cal.
Wednesday

My dear Mother,
The retransformations of daughter from a skeleton and blood creations still on. Indeed even the letters which came me to put me into my movements from the various gates do not retard towards plumpness and well decided one the gain I left home in and fever which I do let into put a good time. I have an intense feel I received two letters your interesting epistolary note from Alice all good and appreciated that prompted this morning we were in our place I'd like to remember the stage ready for a start. so much is to be for companions we had Mrs & Mrs at seven days I Tennesseal and daughter Ada about

North Tennesseal
Blamada County -
July 3, 1896

My dear Mother,
We arrived here in safety yesterday morning but I was so sick I couldn't write to you. I stood the journey well until the last part of it since we left Spokane. We took the 8:50 train and arrived at Portland at half past eleven - there we had to wait until 8:50 in the evening. We met a brother of Mr. Winans at the Portland station. He had expected to meet his mother but the latter had changed his plans and gone to Seattle going Augustus a description of his brother and asking him to explain to him the why of his non appearance which he did. Mr. Winans accompanied Hotel Parker's to lunch and



My dear Mother,
I cannot keep track of you and Susan and have not the least idea to whom I directed my last epistle so being in doubt I will send this one to the head of the family. This has been one of the most delightful days we have spent since leaving home. The weather has been awfully good yet - I had a good night at the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and succeeded in sleeping off my headache. At half past eight that prompted this morning we were in our place I'd like to remember the stage ready for a start. so much is to be for companions we had Mrs & Mrs at seven days I Tennesseal and daughter Ada about