
Inventory of the Samuel L. Clemens - Frances N. Winzer Papers, 1907-1910

The Huntington Library

San Marino, California

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Processed by:

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Date Completed:

June 1982

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Samuel L. Clemens - Frances N. Winzer Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1907-1910

Creator: Clemens, Samuel L. Winzer, Frances N.

Extent: 44 pieces, including 41 letters and notes from Clemens to Frances, and snapshots.

Repository: The Huntington Library

San Marino, California 91108

Language: English

Provenance

Gift of the Frances N. Winzer Estate, May, 1982.

Access

Collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information please go to following [URL](#) .

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Samuel L. Clemens - Frances N. Winzer Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Biography

In June, 1907, Samuel Clemens travelled to England, where he was to receive an honorary degree from Oxford University. One of his shipmates for the Atlantic crossing was Frances (Nunnally) Winzer (c. 1892-1982), the daughter of J. H. Nunnally, an Atlanta candy manufacturer. The teenaged schoolgirl and the 71-year-old author became acquainted and, discovering that they were staying in the same London hotel, Clemens escorted the young girl he called Francesca on visits and social calls. Back in the United States, their friendship continued and Frances became one of several honorary grandchildren to Clemens, who had lamented that he had reached the grandfather stage of life without grandchildren of his own.

Two years after the friendship began, Frances asked Clemens to speak at her graduation. He agreed and in June, 1909, left his Redding, Connecticut, home and journeyed to Catonsville, Maryland, to be the commencement speaker at St. Timothy's school for young women. His address included this advice (much quoted in the contemporary press) to the young ladies: Don't smoke, drink, or marry -- that is, to excess. While in Maryland, Clemens for the first time suffered the chest pains of the heart ailment that would result in his death less than a year later on April 21, 1910, at the age of 74. The affectionate correspondence between Clemens and his young friend continued until shortly before his death.

- Photographs of Samuel Clemens and Frances N. Winzer: two snapshots taken at Clemens' home in Redding, Conn., September, 1908 (in HM 48476); and a picture of them taken at Frances' graduation from St. Timothy's school, Catonsville, Maryland, June 10, 1909 (HM 48492).
- Samuel Clemens. The Aquarium: [rules and regulations for a club formed by Clemens (Curator or Admiral of the Aquarium) and several schoolgirl friends (Members of the Aquarium)]: photostat (FAC 1023).
- Samuel Clemens. Letter of December 9, 1908, discusses a John Milton celebration he regrets having declined; he mentions in particular the teasing of William Dean Howells he will miss by not attending the event (HM 48477).
- Samuel Clemens. Letter of July 15, 1909, discusses Clemens' thoughts about his recently-diagnosed heart condition (HM 48486).
- Clippings from Atlanta newspapers about Clemens and Frances Winzer. In Hyams (Walter) and Co., letter to Frances (Nunnally) Winzer, April 22, 1910 (HM 48491).

Material Transferred

Additional photographs are in the Photographic Collections of the Rare Book Department; they include formal portraits and photographs taken on shipboard.