
Guide to the John Swett Papers, 1853-1913

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Note

History --History, CaliforniaSocial Sciences --EducationGeographical (By Place) --California

Guide to the John Swett Papers, 1853-1913

Collection number: BANC MSS C-B 352

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: John Swett Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1853-1913

Collection Number: BANC MSS C-B 352

Creator: Swett, John, 1830-1913

Extent: Number of containers: 2 cartons, 1 oversize folder
Linear ft.: 5

Repository: The Bancroft Library
Berkeley, California 94720-6000

Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Abstract: Letters, primarily from other educators and publishers; biographical sketches and memorial tributes; personalia; ms. of his Public Education in California; royalty statements and publishing contracts; appointment certificates; scrapbooks relating to his family (with photographs) and to his professional activities.

Languages Represented: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Scope and Content

John Swett, educator and author, was born at Pittsfield, New Hampshire, July 31, 1830. Educated at the Pittsfield and Pembroke academies and at the Merrimack Normal Institute, he became a teacher. Because of a serious weakness of his eyes, he undertook a voyage to California in 1852, around the Horn, with the hope of recovering his health. After six months of mining, he became principal of the Rincon School, San Francisco. In 1862 he was elected state superintendent of public instruction and served until 1868. Under his administration, the state school law was amended to provide effective means of levying and collecting money for school purposes, and education in California was raised to a profession with the establishment of state and county boards of examination and a system of teachers' institutes. After his defeat for reelection in 1868, he became principal of the Denman School, San Francisco, and served thereafter as deputy city superintendent of public schools, 1870-73, principal of the girls' high school and normal school, 1876-89, and city school superintendent, 1890-96. He then retired to a fruit farm at Martinez, California, where he resided until his death in 1913.

His papers were given to the Library by his son, Frank T. Swett, ca. 1914, and additions were made in September 1954 by Mr. Swett and his daughters, Margaret S. Plummer and Elizabeth S. Knoll. Spanning the period ca. 1853-1913, they consist primarily of letters addressed to him by other educators; biographical sketches and memorial tributes; personalia; the MS of his book, *Public Education in California*; royalty statements and publishing contracts; appointment certificates; and scrapbooks relating to his family (with photographs) and to his professional activities. The collection is described in greater detail in the Key to Arrangement which follows. Some printed items and photographs were removed for separate cataloging.

Ctn. 1

Letters written to John Swett**Additional Note**

Primarily letters from other educators and from publishers; arranged alphabetically. A list of the more important correspondents follows the Key. Unlisted letters are in a "Miscellany," at the beginning of the carton.

Congratulatory letters, 83rd birthday, 1913**Additional Note**

Miscellaneous letters from well-wishers.

Letters written by Swett**Additional Note**

Two letters, addressed to his wife.

Biographical sketches and memorial tributes**Personalia and miscellaneous items relating to Swett****Additional Note**

Included is a copy of his will, information about his ancestry, etc.

Writings

MS of *Public Education in California* (corrected typescript)

Unidentified MS

History of the Public School System of California

***Public Education in California* - copy inscribed to Myra Wallace Swett**

Royalty statements, publishing contracts, etc.

Miscellaneous papers re John Swett Grammar School, San Francisco

Clippings (3 folders)

Miscellaneous papers

Unidentified commonplace book

Ctn. 2

Scrapbooks**Additional Note**

Because of their poor physical condition, many of the scrapbooks have been taken apart, but contents have been kept together in folders, with the scrapbook titles recorded on the folders.

"Family Records" - photographs, genealogical information, testimonials, notation of incidents in the lives of his children, certificates of appointment, clippings, etc.

"Supplementary Swett Family Record Book ..." (folder) - photographs, tributes, clippings, copies of magazines, etc.

"My Scrap Book as City Superintendent of Public Schools, San Francisco; 1891 to 1895 ..." - clippings

"Scrap Book of Collections for a high grade reading book that was never published" - (folder), excerpts from books, clippings, etc. with notes

"Miscellaneous Odds and Ends of Press Notices and Miscellaneous Reports and Addresses 1912" - mounted in a geography text book

"A Scrap Book of my First Campaign for the Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in California 1862" (folder) - clippings, portion of a speech, and MS of chapter from *Public Education in California* (typescript)

"Scraps of Verse of All Kinds..." (folder) - primarily clippings; some MSS

"The Rincon Grammar School Scrap Book 1853-1862" (folder) - clippings, programs, circulars, etc.

"Specimens of Editorial Items in the *California Teacher* During the first years of its Existence Selected by John Swett" (folder)

"Selected Items from some of my State Reports ..." (folder)

"Some of My Articles as The Pacific Coast Editor of the *New England Journal of Education* ..." (folder)

"Collection of Prose Educational Articles and Papers, and other Sources by John Swett, 1913" (folders)

Notebook containing mounted clippings of poems and some MSS (Mary L. Tracy Swett's book?)

oversize Oversize
folder

Certificates of appointments**American Book Company**

10 letters, 1896-1913. Primarily re publication of his textbooks.

Bancroft (H. H.) & Company

Letter, Feb 25, 1867. Re publication of his "Teacher's Register."

Barry, James Henry, 1856-1927

2 letters & telegram, 1912.

Bidwell, Annie Ellicott (Kennedy), 1839-1918

Letter, Feb 11, 1908.

Boone, Richard G.

5 letters, 1911-1913.

Brown, Elmer Ellsworth, 1861-

3 letters, 1903-1911.

Butler, Nicholas Murray, 1862-1947

5 letters, 1899-1911.

California. State Library

3 letters, 1907-1912. Two refer to his gifts to the Library.

California. University. Regents

2 letters, 1912-1913. Referring to his post as honorary lecturer.

California Teachers Association

3 letters, 1909-1913.

Draper, Andrew Stone, 1848-1913

6 letters, 1901-1912.

Eaton, John, 1829-1906

3 letters, 1900-1904.

Emerson, Charles Franklin, 1843-1922

3 letters, 1911.

Harper & Brothers

6 letters, 1872-1886. Primarily transmitting royalty payments.

Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor & Co., New York

6 letters, 1872-1889. Primarily re publication of his textbooks.

Millspaugh, Jesse Fonda, 1855-1919

Letter, May 7, 1913.

Pardee, George Cooper, 1857-1941

2 letters, 1906. Re appointment to the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Normal School.

Reid, William Thomas, 1843-1922

Letter, n.d.

San Francisco. Dept. of Education

Letter, Oct 1, 1912. Re dedication exercises for John Swett School.

San Francisco. Superintendent of Schools

Letter, July 31, 1912. Congratulatory letter, 82nd birthday.

Turrill, Charles Beebe, 1854-1927

3 letters, 1912. One refers to the Lincoln Grammar School Association.

Wheeler, Benjamin Ide, 1854-1927

Letter, Nov 30, 1905.