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 folderLinear 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
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], John Swett papers, BANC MSS C-B 352, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
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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
Key to Arrangement

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

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
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.