Hubon Family Papers

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Descriptive Summary

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Abstract: The Hubon Family Papers contain the correspondence of early San Diego settler Frederick Hubon (1827-1882), and include letters from three generations of Hubons, with some additional correspondence from other acquaintances. The correspondence touches upon major events of the nineteenth century, including California's gold rush and the Civil War, as well as personal Hubon family concerns.

Creator: Hubon family

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Provenance
These materials were collected by John B. Goodman, III, and were donated by him to UC San Diego.

Historical Background
The Hubon Family Papers provide a glimpse into the lives of three generations of San Diego pioneer Frederick Hubon's (1827-1882) family. The earliest history of the family's migration from France to America is unclear but the family's only reporter, Frederick's niece, Emily Hubon, said their branch of the family lived in Baltimore, Maryland, in the late 1700s. Frederick's grandfather, Stephen Hubon, moved to the Caribbean island of St. Thomas, perhaps to be employed with the tobacco or sugar plantation trade. St. Thomas is where Frederick's father, Henry, is said to have been born, circa 1788. When Henry was approximately fourteen years old, he was sent to the United States for his education. However, shortly before the boat sailed, according to the family reporter, a slave revolt occurred on St. Thomas Island, many people were murdered, and these grandparents were never heard from again. The ship captain then allegedly stole the boy's education money and deposited young Henry into an apprenticeship in Salem, Massachusetts. Henry spent time at sea and eventually became a Salem undertaker.

Henry is first found in the 1812 Salem historical records when he married Ann Beckford. Ann bore one child, Eliza Ann, and died shortly thereafter at age 22. Henry was at sea and reportedly did not know he had a daughter for a number of years. The child may have been adopted as marriage records later cross-reference the last name Caban in addition to Hubon, and these circumstances are confirmed by Emily Hubon's family history.

When Henry returned to Salem from sea, he met and married Frances (nee Dwyer or Dwire, probably the daughter of Edmund and Anna Grant Dwire of Salem) Hubon on December 13, 1818. Their children included Frederick (born Stephen Frederick), Henry G., Edward, Mary, and possibly others. Frederick's brother, Henry G., with whom he remained close all his life, became a carpenter, followed Frederick to California in 1849, and later returned to Salem to take over the family undertaking business.

Frederick was born in Salem on September 19, 1827. At age 22, he caught "gold fever" and ventured off to become a California "forty-niner." He arrived in San Francisco on September 26, 1849 on board the Cordova. Shortly thereafter, he was joined by his brother, Henry G., and they were in Stockton and the new town of Benicia, perhaps utilizing their
carpentry skills to help build those cities. Henry G. became sick and returned to Salem, and within three years, Frederick also returned to Salem. A miniscule glimpse of their adventures in this period are captured in Henry G.'s letter to Frederick when he was in Panama on his way back to Massachusetts.

In 1858, in Salem, Frederick married Sarah Livingston Allen (reportedly a descendant of Dr. David Livingston of African exploration fame) who was born on Prince Edwards Island, Canada on October 27, 1829. After beginning a family of four children (Frederick Lincoln, 1-16-1860; Clarence Edward, 9-1-1862; Fannie Dwyer, 11-17-1864; Irving Allen, 11-19-1867) in Massachusetts, Frederick and Sarah sailed to San Francisco and then moved south to San Diego, arriving on September 23, 1868. Their fifth and final child, Leonard James, was born on September 22, 1870, in San Diego.

When the Hubon family arrived, San Diego was primitive and sparsely populated (the 1870 census showed a population of only 2,300). A terrible smallpox epidemic had ravaged the region six years earlier, and the first public school house was only two years old. At first, Frederick, much to Sarah's dismay, tried farming, and so moved his family to an even more isolated area. Sarah wrote of her fear when a drunken man came to their farm house when she was alone with the children. Farming was not successful for Frederick, so the family moved back to town, much to Sarah's relief. The 1880 census lists Frederick as a carpenter and Sarah keeping house with the five children.

Frederick died at the family's San Diego residence at the corner of Seventh and D Streets on May 15th, 1882. The next day's San Diego Union paper stated his death was "after a long and painful illness." They also noted that, "San Diego numbered him among her best citizens." Frederick and Sarah's second son, Clarence Edward, died three years later, of unidentified causes, at age 23.

Widow Sarah Hubon lived on into her ninth decade, passing away on October 21, 1923. The remaining four children prospered in San Diego. In 1890, Irving was a surveyor and civil engineer for the city of San Diego, Frederick Lincoln was a deputy city clerk, and youngest son, Leonard, was a clerk at the Horton House pharmacy. Daughter Fannie married Charles A. Stedman, who became the harbor-master of San Diego. When Fannie died in 1950, the San Diego Union would recognize her life as a San Diego pioneer, as well as a poet and writer. Many of the Hubons are buried at Mount Hope Cemetery in San Diego.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Hubon Family Papers contain the correspondence of early San Diego settler Frederick Hubon (1827-1882), and include letters from three generations of Hubons, with some additional correspondence from other acquaintances. The correspondence touches upon major events of the nineteenth century, including California's gold rush and the Civil War, as well as personal Hubon family concerns. The papers include a small amount of miscellaneous materials such as a carte-de-visite photographic portrait of Frederick's mother, Sarah Livingston Allen Hubon, and her remembrances of early San Diego; genealogical information; and a poem by Frederick's daughter, Fannie Hubon Stedman.

The papers are arranged in chronological order in two series: 1) CORRESPONDENCE and 2) MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS.

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Subjects and Indexing Terms
Hubon family -- Archives
California -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Sources
Gold mines and mining -- California -- History -- Sources
San Diego (Calif.) -- History
Scope and Content of Series

SERIES 1) CORRESPONDENCE

The CORRESPONDENCE series contains letters from three generations of the Hubon family, beginning with a letter from Frederick's grandfather Stephen to his son Henry as a fourteen-year old boy in 1802. The second generation is represented in letters from Henry and Frances Hubon to their sons, Frederick and Henry G. Finally there are letters between Frederick and his siblings, mostly from his brother Henry G. Correspondence from friends and others make up the balance of the series and include a letter from a Civil War soldier and friend stationed at a fort along the Arlington line defending the city of Washington, and a letter from a stranger, describing to a Mrs. Henderson, the illness and death of her sister, Mrs. Caroline Hubon, at a hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, leaving behind an unidentified Mr. Hubon, too distraught to write himself, and a small child.

Box 1, Folder 1

Letter from Stephen N. Hubon to his son Henry 1802 September 27

General note

Handwritten letter to his young son Henry, while Henry was in the care of Captain Knight of Salem, written from Port Republican, now Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Box 1, Folder 2

Letter from Edward Hubon to his brother Frederick 1848 November 19

General note

Handwritten letter to Frederick from his brother, who was working as a travelling salesman selling maps and charts in Lowell, Middlesex County, Massachusetts.

Box 1, Folder 3

Letter from Edward Hubon to his brother Frederick, 1849 January 18

General note

Handwritten letter to Frederick from his brother, who was working as a carpenter in San Juan de los Remedios, Cuba. Henry sailed to Cuba (then still a Spanish colony exporting tobacco) on the Caroline and included in his letter a pencil-drawn picture and diagram of the house he was working on.

Box 1, Folder 4

Letter from Henry and Frances Hubon to their sons, Henry G. and Frederick 1851 February 9

General note

Handwritten letter from the Hubons to their sons, Henry G. and Frederick, then residing in Stockton, California. As an undertaker, Henry (father) shares the news of all who have died in Salem.

Box 1, Folder 5

Letter from Henry G. Hubon to his brother Frederick 1851 April 20

General note

Handwritten letter from Henry Hubon, written on board the steamer Tennessee located in Panama Bay, to his brother Frederick, who remained at Benicia, California.

Box 1, Folder 6

Letter from Elmira J. Shuttuck to Mrs. Caroline M. Hubon 1854 August 26

General note

Handwritten letter to Mrs. Caroline M. Hubon, from Elmira Shuttuck, a friend who lived and was to work in the mill at Milford. Elmira mentions that Caroline has a small child, Martha Ellen, and is due to have twins.
Letter from Elmira J. Shutttuck to Mrs. Caroline M. Hubon, 1854 August 26

Letter from Eliza Reshow to Mrs. Henderson, informing of the illness and death of Caroline Hubon, in the King’s Hotel, in St. Louis, Missouri 1855 May 3-6

General note
Handwritten letter by Eliza Reshow, a stranger, telling Mrs. Henderson of the illness and death of her sister, Caroline Hubon, in the King’s Hotel, in St. Louis, Missouri. Mrs. Reshow is writing for Mr. Hubon who is too distraught to write. Caroline is buried in the BelleFontaine cemetery in St. Louis, leaving behind her husband and infant.

Letter from Eliza Reshow to Mrs. Henderson, informing of the illness and death of Caroline Hubon, in the King’s Hotel, in St. Louis, Missouri, 1855 May 3-6

Letter from Henry G. Hubon to his brother Frederick 1856 February 24

General note
Handwritten letter to Frederick, in which Henry G. (his brother) mentions he is now running the family undertaking business. On verso of letter is a handwritten poem about a mother by an unidentified writer.

Letter from Henry G. Hubon to his brother Frederick, 1856 February 24

Letter from Henry G. Hubon to his brother 1856 May 16

General note
Handwritten letter to “Dear Brother,” probably Frederick.

Letter from Henry G. Hubon to his brother, 1856 May 16

Letter from Frederick Hubon to Sarah L. Allen ca. 1857-1858

General note
Undated letter to Fredrick’s future wife, Sarah Livingston Allen, that includes a love poem. Frederick and Sarah were married in November of 1858.

Letter from Frederick Hubon to Sarah L. Allen, circa 1857-1858

Letter from Robert P. Bruce to Frederick Hubon 1864 February 28

General note
Handwritten letter from Frederick Hubon’s friend, Robert P. Bruce, who was serving in the Civil War at Fort Tillinghast, near Arlington, Virginia, which was part of the defense of the Washington.

Letter from Robert P. Bruce to Frederick Hubon, 1864 February 28

MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS

Scope and Content of Series
SERIES 2: MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS
The MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS series contains genealogical notes created by both the family and by John B. Goodman, III, the original collector of the papers in this collection. Also included is a handwritten transcription (1880) of an 1801 letter, not otherwise represented in the collection, from Frederick’s grandfather to Frederick’s father; a handwritten account of Frederick’s mother’s recollections of the families’ earliest experiences in San Diego written by daughter Fannie after her death in 1923; a carte-de-visite photographic portrait of Sarah A. Hubon (ca. 1860s); a typescript of sister Fannie Hubon Stedman’s poem, “The Hills at Eventide;” a handwritten transcript of Fannie’s obituary from the San Diego Union, dated in 1950, and niece Emily Hubon’s 1922 letter to Fannie regarding early Hubon ancestors.
Box 1, Folder 12  Copy of a letter by Stephen N. Hubon to his son Henry 1801 September 27, transcribed 1880

General note
Handwritten copy of a letter (original not present in this collection) transcribed by Frederick Hubon. The letter is from Frederick's grandfather, Stephen, to Frederick's father, Henry, when Henry was a boy, and under the care of Captain Knight of Salem. Annotated a "true copy of letter written to my father in 1801," signed by F. Hubon, San Diego, 1880 April 11.

Box 1, Folder 13  Partial copy of a letter by Emily Hubon to her cousin Fannie 1922

General note
Handwritten transcription of a portion of a 1922 letter By Emily Hubon to her cousin, Fannie, describing her knowledge of the early Hubon family history. Transcriber possibly Irving Hubon.

Box 1, Folder 14  Account of Sarah Hubon's memories of early San Diego, with a carte-de-visite portrait ca. 1860-1923

General note
Handwritten account transcribed by Fannie Hubon Stedman of Sarah Hubon's (Frederick Hubon's wife) memories of coming to San Diego in 1868. She describes their travels to and within California, the early settlement, the manners of the people, and mentions Alonzo Horton. The account was written after Sarah Hubon's death on October 21, 1923. Includes a circa 1860s carte-de-visite photographic portrait of Sarah Hubon, before her marriage, taken in Salem, Massachusetts.

Box 1, Folder 15  The Hills at Eventide ca. 1920-1950

General note
Undated, signed typescript of a poem by Fannie Hubon Stedman. Includes a handwritten transcription of Fannie's obituary as it was printed in the San Diego Union on 1950 January 7, with the headline, "Pioneer of Town Passes."

Box 1, Folder 16  Handwritten genealogical notes on the Hubon family ca. 1890-1966

General note

Box 1, Folder 17  Handwritten genealogical notes on the Hubon family, circa 1890-1966  Handwritten genealogical notes on the Hubon family ca. 1889-1950

General note
Includes handwritten genealogy notes by an unidentified writer, and a commercial genealogical form filled in with Frederick and Sarah Hubon's family information.