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Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 1815-1902

Title: Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers

Dates: 1792-1981

**Dates
(bulk):** 1839-1899

Quantity: 1.4 cubic feet (7 boxes)

The collection contains material related to Elizabeth Cady Stanton's work for women's suffrage, abolition, temperance, and other social causes. Includes family and professional correspondence,

Abstract: biographical and autobiographical material, transcripts of her speeches, and photographs. Also includes material by others, such as her daughter, Margaret Stanton Lawrence, about the women's movement and Stanton's life and career.

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Biographical Note

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), a leader in the struggle for women's rights, was born on 12 November 1815, in Johnstown, NY, and graduated from Emma Willard's Troy Female Seminary in 1832. Through her close relationship with her cousin Gerrit Smith, a wealthy landowner and reformer, and his daughter, Elizabeth Smith Miller, Stanton became interested in the antislavery and temperance movements, and married the abolitionist Henry Stanton in 1840. As reflected in her letters from 1839-1859, her concerns for the next twenty years appear to have been her children (seven born between 1842 and 1859) and family, but it was during this period that she became one of the leaders in the women's rights movement. She helped to organize the first convention in Seneca Falls, NY in 1848 and formed the friendship with Susan B. Anthony that was to be so important for the future of the feminist movement. At the well-attended convention in Seneca Falls, Stanton proposed a resolution advocating suffrage for women. The resolution was the first public demand by women for the vote and, eloquently defended by Frederick Douglass, was finally adopted.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's letters, which span the years 1867-1885 and include several to Paulina Wright Davis, another feminist and suffragist, reveal the public person. She became a very popular lecturer on the Lyceum circuit at this time and used her fame and popularity to further the cause of women's rights throughout the United States and abroad. Stanton persuaded Aaron Sargent of California to introduce a federal woman suffrage amendment following the wording of the Fifteenth Amendment. It was reintroduced in every Congress until finally adopted in 1920. In the 1880s, Stanton and Susan B. Anthony prepared the monumental three-volume *History of Woman Suffrage*, the last volume of which appeared in 1886.

In later years, Stanton, famous and widely honored, devoted more time to writing for newspapers and magazines such as the *Westminster Review*, *Arena*, *Forum*, and *North American Review*. Still, another controversy involved her. Convinced that the church and its interpretation of the Bible were great obstacles to the progress of women, she demanded that women have an equal place in the church and published *The Woman's Bible*, a commentary analyzing the Bible's derogatory references to women. These activities are reflected in her letters from 1885-1902.

In 1898, Stanton published her reminiscences, *Eighty Years and More*, and continued to express her views on religion, divorce, and other subjects. She died at the age of eighty-six. For months afterwards, newspapers and magazines acknowledged Elizabeth Cady Stanton as "a statesman of the woman's rights movement and the mother of woman suffrage."

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Scope and Content Note

The collection includes correspondence with Susan B. Anthony, Paulina Wright Davis, Elizabeth Smith Miller, Gerrit Smith, and others relating to family matters, her children, the women's movement, her lectures and travels, publication of her books and articles, women and religion, abolition, temperance, and other social causes, 1839-1902; phrenological report by L.N. Fowler on the character of Stanton, 1853; and clippings, articles, transcripts of her speeches, an autobiographical sketch, and photographs. Other items include correspondence by Margaret Stanton Lawrence and others on the women's movement, other social causes, and Stanton's career, 1792-1927; and manuscripts and typescripts by Margaret Stanton Lawrence about Elizabeth Cady Stanton's life and career.

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Access and Use

Access

This collection is open for research according to the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#) without any additional restrictions.

Restrictions on Use

Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#).

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Subject Headings

Names:

- Anthony, Susan B. (Susan Brownell), 1820-1906
- Davis, Paulina W. (Paulina Wright), 1813-1876
- Fowler, L.N. (Lorenzo Niles), 1811-1896
- Lawrence, Margaret Stanton
- Miller, Elizabeth Smith, 1822-1911
- Smith, Gerrit, 1797-1874
- Stanton family

Subjects:

- Abolitionists
- Family--New York (State)
- Feminist literature--Women authors
- Feminists
- Phrenology
- Slavery--Anti-slavery movements
- Temperance
- Women and religion
- Women authors, American
- Women social reformers
- Women travelers
- Women's rights
- Women--Social conditions
- Women--Suffrage

Document Types:

- Autobiographies
- Autographs
- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Printed ephemera
- Scrapbooks

VCL Categories:

- Family
- Religion
- Women's History

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Encoding Information

Encoded by Elizabeth Clarke, August 2007. Updated by Emma Gronbeck, May 2023.

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Administrative Information**Preferred Citation**

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Original processing date unknown.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Harriot Stanton Blatch (VC 1878) and Alma Lutz (VC 1912).

Other Formats

Scrapbooks are also available on microfilm. With the exception of extenuating circumstances, readers will be required to use the microfilm. A part of "Phrenological Character of Mrs. Elizabeth [sic] C. Stanton..." found in Volume 1 of the Scrapbooks was not microfilmed. The reader will find a photocopy of this part in Box 3 of the Stanton Papers.

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Series List

[Series I. Correspondence, 1839-1902 \(Boxes 1-3\)](#)

This series contains 147 letters (1839-1902) relating to family, children, the women's movement, lectures and travels, publication of Stanton's books, articles, and other topics.

[Series II. Unpublished Manuscripts by Margaret Stanton Lawrence, undated \(Box 4\)](#)

This series contains four unpublished manuscripts by Stanton's daughter about her mother's life and career.

[Series III. Scrapbooks, 1792-1927 \(Boxes 5-7\)](#)

This series consists of 3 volumes containing letters written to Elizabeth Cady Stanton from others involved in the women's movement and other causes, as well as clippings of her newspaper articles and letters to the editor, copies of speeches, photographs, and other memorabilia. Volume 1 contains letters from Susan B. Anthony to Stanton and Volume 2 contains a typescript of "Our Young Girls," Stanton's favorite and most popular lecture on the New York Lyceum Bureau circuit.

[Series IV. Miscellaneous, 1839-1981 \(Box 3\)](#)

This series consists of additional materials related to Stanton, such as printed articles and ephemera, poetry written by Stanton, biographical and family ephemera, and a photocopy of "Phrenological Character of Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton."

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- Folder 1.1.2 [Susan B. Anthony](#), 1855 Jan 3
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- Folder 1.2.2 [Rachel Foster \[Avery\]](#), [1880s] (1 ALS w/ TS)
- Folder 1.3 [Edward Baines](#), [1869] Apr 10 (1 ALS w/ TS)
- Folder 1.4 [Harriot Stanton Blatch](#), [1879] Mar 24 (1ALS w/ TS)
- Folder 1.5 [William J. Bok](#), [1894] Nov 18 (1 ALS w/TS)
- Folder 1.6 [Mr. Brown](#), 1872 (1 ALS w/ TS)
- Folder 1.7.1 [\[Lloyd\] Bryce](#), [1893 Dec] (1 ALS w/ TS)
- Folder 1.7.2 [\[Lloyd\] Bryce](#), [1893 Dec 15] (1 ALS w/ TS)
- Folder 1.8 [C.S. Carter](#), 1876 Oct 2 (1 ALS w/ TS)
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- Folder 1.10 [Laura Brownell Collier](#), 1886 Jan 21 (1 ALS w/ env.)
- Folder 1.11 [Mrs. Darlington](#), [no year] May 27 (1 ALS w/ TS)
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