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Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: Clinton, Margery

Title: Margery Clinton Papers

**Inclusive
Dates:** 1908-1966

Bulk Dates: 1908-1910

Quantity: 0.2 cubic feet (1 box)

Abstract: The Margery Clinton Papers include correspondence, photographs, clippings and other materials relating to Clinton's relationship with Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain).

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Biographical Note

Margery Hamilton Clinton (24 Jun 1887 - Feb 1980) was the daughter of Emily de S. Gorsuch and the well-known New York City architect Charles W. Clinton. The Clintons had homes in New York City as well as Tuxedo Park. According to a collection of Samuel Clemens letters edited by John Cooley (*Mark Twain's Aquarium*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), Margery Clinton met Clemens some time in 1907 or 1908 through a mutual friend, Mary Rogers, also of Tuxedo Park. The two struck up a friendship, and Clinton was invited on several occasions to Stormfield, Clemens' home in Redding, Connecticut. Visits and correspondence between the two continued through the rest of Clemens' life. His last existing letter to her was 17 November 1909, although there is an empty envelope in the collection postmarked from Bermuda, 10 February 1910. Clemens died 10 weeks later at Stormfield.

Clinton later married Lamar R. Leahy, a navy man who had served in WWI and was eventually made Rear Admiral. They had no children. She died in 1980 in New York at the age of 93.

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Scope and Content Note

The Margery Clinton Papers include correspondence, photographs, clippings and other materials relating to Clinton's relationship with Samuel Clemens. The most significant items can be found in the correspondence. Although many of the letters are brief, Clemens corresponded with Clinton for at least two years. Most letters are about planned visits or requests for visits (for some reason Clinton is frequently referred to as "the plumber"), but the letters also include updates on Clemens' declining health. Other correspondents include Clemens' daughter Clara; his business manager, Ralph Ashcroft (sometimes referred to as "The Bishop" or "Benares"); and his secretary, Isabel Lyon. There are also two letters from Clinton to her father, one of which includes a description of a visit she and her friend Caroline Rogers had with President William Howard Taft. Armed only with a letter of introduction from Clemens, the two young women asked for and were granted a meeting with the newly elected president the day before his inauguration.

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Arrangement

At some point the scrapbook was unbound. The current arrangement does not reflect original order. [Top](#)

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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Related Material

Related Materials

- [Samuel L. Clemens Papers](#)

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Subject Headings

Names:

- Ashcroft, Ralph W.
- Lyon, Isabel, 1863-1958
- Twain, Mark, 1835-1910

Subjects:

- Authors, American--20th century
- Humorists, American--20th century

Document Types:

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Printed ephemera

VCL Categories:

- Literature and Writing

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Encoding Information

Encoded by Laura Streett, January 2010. Updated by Emma Gronbeck, October 2025.

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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Margery Clinton Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Processed by Laura Streett, January 2010.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Mrs. Nathaniel Burt, February 1982. Mrs. Burt was probably Margaret Clinton Burt, the daughter of Clinton's brother, Charles K. Clinton.

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Container List

- Folder 1 Correspondence — Ashcroft, Ralph, 1909 (2 ALS)
- Folder 2 Correspondence — Ashcroft, Ralph and Isabel Lyon, 1909 Mar 11 (1 ALS)
- Folder 3 Correspondence — Clemens, Clara, 1910 (1 ALS, 1 TLS, 1 sympathy acknowledgment card)
- Folder 4 Correspondence — Clemens, Clara, 1912, 1936 (1 ALS, 1 postcard)
- Folder 5 Correspondence — Clemens, Samuel L., 1908 (3 ALS, 1 postcard, 1 personalized invitation to his library fundraiser)
- Folder 6 Correspondence — Clemens, Samuel L., 1909 Feb - Mar (3 ALS, 1 transcript of letter to President Taft)
- Folder 7 Correspondence — Clemens, Samuel L., 1909 Aug - Nov (4 ALS, 1 invitation)
- Folder 8 Correspondence — Clemens, Samuel L., 1909-1910 (2 empty envelopes)
- Folder 9 Correspondence — Clinton, Margery to her father, 1909 (1 ALS, 1 fragment)
- Folder 10 Correspondence — Dilling, Mildred, [no year] May 2 (series of 3 postcards)
- Folder 11 Correspondence — Lyon, Isabel, 1908 (3 ALS)
- Folder 12 Correspondence — Lyon, Isabel, 1909 (2 ALS, 1 wedding invitation, 1 calling card)
- Folder 13 Correspondence — Lyon, Isabel, undated (3 ALS)
- Folder 14 Correspondence — Lyon, Mrs. G. V., 1909 (1 ALS)
- Folder 15 Correspondence — O'Shea, Beth, 1947 Jan 30 (1 ALS)
- Folder 16 Miscellaneous notes and scraps relating to Clinton's experiences with Clemens, undated (1 SLC calling card and 5 additional items)
- Folder 17 Clemens photographs [at Stormfield], [1908?] (2 sheets w/ 8 prints and 8 loose prints)

Folder 18	Stormfield guest book photocopies and related correspondence, 1936
Folder 19	Mark Twain memorial, undated
Folder 20	"Mark Twain Tonight" material, 1959-1966, undated (includes 2 ALS from Hal Holbrook)
Folder 21	Clippings, undated
Folder 22	Miscellaneous, undated
Folder 23	Original scrapbook cover, undated

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