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Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: Macy, Henrietta G., 1853-1927

Title: Henrietta Macy Papers

Dates: 1888-1926

Quantity: 0.2 cubic feet (1 box)

Abstract: The collection contains 58 letters from philanthropist, artist, and historian Henrietta G. Macy (VC SPEC 1886-1887) to Adelaide Underhill (VC 1888) and Fanny Clark (Mrs. George E. Clark).

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Biographical Note

Henrietta Gardner Macy was born in Illinois to Henry Gardner Macy and Sarah Denton. When she was seventeen years old, she trained as a kindergarten teacher and began to teach. In 1878, she founded a kindergarten for the Italian children of the North End of Boston and spent several years teaching there. At the late age of 32, Macy attended Vassar College as a Special Student from 1886 to 1887, where she nurtured a love of sculpting. She then took a position as European correspondent for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle and other newspapers, and traveled extensively.

In 1890, she settled in Venice and set up a studio in the yellow house known as Ca' Frollo, where she crafted plaster reproductions of Venetian monuments. Although she lived modestly, she shared what little she had with the needy, particularly the neighborhood children. She bought part of the former convent of the Augustinian sisters on the island of Murano, and opened a school there for the poor children of the island.

Macy passed away in 1927, at the age of 74.

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Scope and Content Note

The collection contains 58 letters from philanthropist, artist, and historian Henrietta G. Macy (VC SPEC 1886-1887) to Adelaide Underhill (VC 1888) and Fanny Clark (Mrs. George E. Clark).

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Arrangement

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Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#).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

- [*The nun of the Ca' Frollo: the life & letters of Henrietta Gardner Macy* by Clementine Bachelier and Jessie Orr White, 1931.](#)

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Subject Headings

Names:

- Underhill, Adelaide, 1860-1936

Subjects:

- Women artists
- Women sculptors--19th century
- Women sculptors--20th century
- Women--Education

Places:

- Venice (Italy)--Social life and customs

Document Types:

- Correspondence

VCL Categories:

- Art and Artists

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Encoding Information

Encoded by Emma Gronbeck, February 2026.

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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Henrietta Macy Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Original processing date unknown. The letters in this collection were formerly part of the [Autograph Files](#) collection, but were separated and re-processed as their own collection by Emma Gronbeck, February 2026.

Acquisition Information

Unknown. It was most likely the gift of Adelaide Underhill, who was Vassar College's Librarian from 1922 to 1928.

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Container List

- Folder 1 Macy, Henrietta to Clark, Fanny (Mrs. George E. Clark), 1901-1917, undated (7 letters)
- Folder 2 Macy, Henrietta to Underhill, Adelaide, 1888-1891 (7 letters, 1 postcard)
- Folder 3 Macy, Henrietta to Underhill, Adelaide, 1894-1898 (10 letters)
- Folder 4 Macy, Henrietta to Underhill, Adelaide, 1900-1905 (9 letters, 1 postcard)
- Folder 5 Macy, Henrietta to Underhill, Adelaide, 1914-1926 (13 letters, 2 postcards)
- Folder 6 Macy, Henrietta to Underhill, Adelaide, undated (4 letters, 4 postcards)
- Folder 7 "Now, the ends of my life are gathered...", 1923 (AMS)

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