

Sara Sheneman Pyle Papers, 1900-1906

Manuscript Collection 183

Shannon Steel

Chester County Historical Society
West Chester, PA 19380
2010

Summary Information:

Collection Title: Sara Sheneman Pyle Papers

Collection Number: Ms. 183

Dates of Collection: 1900-1906

Box Numbers: 1 box, 4 folders

Repository: Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA 19380

Language: English

Biography:

Sara M. Sheneman was born in 1884 to parents W. Worthington Sheneman and Hannah M. Hoffman Sheneman at the family home. Sara was a 1902 graduate of Darlington Seminary in West Chester. Sara married Dewitt Pyle on March 28, 1906 at her home. Dewitt Pyle was a dairy farmer and the couple lived at Meadowbrook Farm, the Sheneman's family farm, in West Pikeland Township. The couple had two children; daughter Helen Mary Pyle in 1909, and son Robert Sheneman Pyle in 1915. Robert passed away just shy of his fifth birthday in July of 1920 from Diphtheria.

Sara was active in the community. She served as a correspondent for The Daily Reporter, was Secretary of the Wimodasi Society, and was President and Secretary of the Pickering Branch of the Needlework Guild of America. Sara worked as a tax collector for West Pikeland Township. Sara died January 2, 1962 at Rush Hospital after becoming ill during the summer. Dewitt Pyle passed away on October 15, 1968. Helen Mary Pyle died in January of 1970.

Resources Used:

CCHS Newspaper Clippings File

Collection Scope and Content Summary:

The collection consists of personal letters to Sara Sheneman, unless otherwise indicated, through the years of 1900-1906 with the majority from 1901-1902. Most of the letters were written to Sara during her years at Darlington Seminary by friends and family. There are two letters sent to Dewitt Pyle in 1906 concerning the couple's wedding. Collection also includes Sara's copybooks from Hillside School.

Collection Arrangement:

Alphabetical by author and then chronologically within author.

Collection Content:**Folder 1: Authors- First Names****Anne**, 1 letter

- Undated. Inquires about a barrette she lost while visiting.

Bess, 1 letter

- July 30, 1901. Writes of school gossip and boys.

Gertrude, 1 letter

- September 29, 1902. Writes of church, school, theater, friends, and boys. Asks about Dewitt.

Mabel, 3 letters

- September 14, 1902. Writes of entertaining company. States her brother gave her a boxing lesson. Wonders if Sara and Dewitt have been riding lately. Comments that she has been seeing more autos than horses and is annoyed by the dust the Vanderbilts create when they drive by. Wishes to visit.
- October 13, 1902. Writes that her sister and her children have been with them all summer because of a coal strike that has left them without coal. Wonders if all children are so mischievous. Author has many questions about school. Comments on boys. Talks of her friends wedding and is glad she is not in her place. Has been walking four mile in order to "reduce her size." Signs letter as Baby Elephant.
- November 24, 1902. Writes of school, gossip, her friend's wedding, Halloween, and Thanksgiving. Mentions going the matinee to see "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Mary [?], 1 letter

- October 2, 1902. Author uses many slang terms. Writes of gossip about friends and boys.

Rosalla, 1 letter

- Undated. Author wishes Sara would visit her. Writes about the Sigma Delta Society at school. Author was elected as Secretary and writes how embarrassed she was and wants Sara to keep it a secret.

Ruth, 1 letter

- April 14, 1901. Author writes of all the upcoming events she is to attend.

Trurie [?], 1 letter

- November 8, 1902. Author writes of her problems with Trigonometry and her conversation on the train.

Folder 2: Authors- Full Names**Acker, Isabel K., 2 letters**

- October 24, 1902. Writes of school. Author mentions that she feels writing shorthand has ruined her spelling. States that they will be getting some coal and that the lack of coal must be harder for people in the city.
- November 22, 1902. Author writes that she is looking forward to Sara's visit and wants her to invite Mr. Pyle and his brother.

Bunn, Harriet E., 2 letters

- December 24, 1900. Author sends thanks for a present. Writes of her family.
- April 22, 1901. Writes of school and the fact that she is staying home to help her mother instead of going back. Mentions that her mother and friend were thrown from a wagon, but that they are alright. Mentions shows that she and Sara have recently performed in.

Chambers, Mary Evans, 1 letter

- October 28, 1902. Short note on a Darlington Seminary postcard requesting the notes to Sara's toast at the Alumnae Banquet.

Dampman, David B., 1 letter

- March 14, 1906. Addressed to Dewitt Pyle and states that he will be there to help with the wedding.

Davis, Ada Rena, 1 letter

- May 7, 1901. Writes that she enjoyed visiting Sara and gossips about a boy that likes Sara, but the author likes him also.

Dunmore, W. Arthur, 2 letters

- May 27, 1901. Accepts Sara's invitation to visit her.
- July 15, 1901. Sends his regrets that he cannot visit.

Griffith, Elizabeth, 2 letters

- October 2, 1902. Offers to help with the speech for the Alumnae Banquet.
- October 5, 1902. Writes of Sara's upcoming visit and asks her to mail her notes ahead of time.

Hess, Adeline, 3 letters

- September 22, 1902. Writes of gossip and boys.
- October 17, 1902. Asks to meet up so they can be together for the Alumnae Banquet.
- November 5, 1902. Writes about several guys and riding on the CLN.

Hope, Sara, 10 letters

- April 1, 1901. Writes of an April fool's joke and a Mr. Clark.
- May 9, 1901. Writes of housecleaning and that they are going to get the trolley because her father signed the right of way. She writes that it will come from West Chester by way of Downingtown to Coatesville and up to Parkesburg.
- September 18, 1902. Asks Sara for her and Dewitt to come visit in October for Halloween. Writes of family and gossip.
- September 25, 1902. Writes that she wishes she could attend Sara's Halloween party, but is not sure she can. Promises to help her with it anyway. Letter is full of suggestions for the party.
- October 2, 1902. Writes that she will attend the party and writes of more plans for the party. Writes of gossip, her new job, and family.
- October 13, 1902. Writes more about the party and has sketches of possible invitations. Comments on boys, gossip, and her job.
- October 17, 1902. Discusses how she will get to the Halloween party.
- October 25, 1902. More plans on how she and others will get to the party. Wonders what she should wear.
- November 7, 1902. Writes of her trip home from the Halloween party and of a birthday party she attended.
- December 1, 1902. Writes of Thanksgiving and states that Sara needs to stay with Dewitt and forget other boys. Comments on family and friends. Mentions changes that may come because the railroad has settled on the land. Sends news of the choir and church. Writes of a man who got his coat shut in the church door. Sends news of the family.

Hull, Ethel Christian, 2 letters

- August 31, 1902. Writes of school and the problems of getting pictures to turn out.
- October 5, 1902. Writes of gossip and has many questions about school and friends. Writes about the Pyles'.

Martin, Bertha, 1 letter

- June 10, 1902. Regrets having to decline an invitation, but sends a small gift.

Pholan [?], Lidie, 3 letters

- April 1, 1901. Discusses different plans to see each other. Mentions she is on bad terms with Aubrey.
- April 17, 1901. Writes that she will visit Sara with her neighbor, John Wells.
- April 24, 1901. Writes that she is sad to hear that Sara and Clarence are not on good terms. Invites Sara to a friend's party and encloses the guest list.

Peirce, M. Viola, 1 letter

- October 4, 1902. Writes of gossip and boys. Mentions the new trolley in Downingtown.

Prizer, Bessie K., 1 letter

- November 23, 1902. Sends an invitation for the evening of November 29th.

Pyle, Aubrey, 1 letter

- January 29, 1901. Had enclosed two tickets. Hopes she can come to a game and wishes to visit soon.

Pyle, Dewitt, 3 letters

- October 23, 1903. Writes of friends, the farm, and plans to see her again.
- February 11, 1904. Writes of work, his illness, and a surprise party he attended.
- September 5, 1906. Opens letter with "My dear, sweetheart wife." Comments on the letter sent from Mary Wilkinson.

Sheneman, Hannah, 4 letters

- April 10, 1901. Writes of sewing Sara a dress and advises to wait and buy a hat at home. Wishes she could see Sara in "The Princess."
- April 17, 1901. Mentions she will see Sara in "The Princess." Writes of visitors and the farm.
- April 24, 1901. Writes of weather, clothes, and the farm. Sent money so she could come home if she wanted.
- April 30, 1901. Regrets that Sara was unable to come home. Writes of town gossip and the farm.

Sheneman, W. Worthington, 1 letter

- Undated. Permission slip to Prof. Bye allowing Sara to go to Philadelphia on March 23rd.

Taylor, Jackson, 2 letters

- October 20, 1902. Accepts invitation for Halloween.
- June 4, 1902. Sends regrets that he cannot attend Sara's commencement.

Wilkinson, Mary, 1 letter

- September 3, 1906. Wants Sara to visit. Comments on what she has been doing recently.

+ 1 miscellaneous envelope.

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Folder 3: Unnamed, Miscellaneous

Letter to Dewitt Pyle from unnamed Aunt and Uncle

- March 20, 1906. Sends congratulations on the wedding and regrets that they will not be able to visit on their wedding trip. Sent gifts to be used in the wedding.

Postcard of Marshall Square, West Chester

Two miscellaneous envelopes

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Folder 4: Schoolbooks

"Exercises" copybook from Hillside School, West Pikeland Township

"Vertical Writing" copybook from Hillside School, West Pikeland Township