

Collection #  
SC 2991  
OM 0534

**MAY WRIGHT SEWALL  
MATERIALS, CA. 1860S–1900**

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 folder, 1 oversized folder, 2 cased images.

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1860s–1900

PROVENANCE: Anonymous, July, 2013

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: *May Wright Sewall, Avowed Feminist*, by Hester Anne Hale (BV 2628); Boomhower, Ray. *But I do Clamor: May Wright Sewall, a life, 1844-1920*. Zionsville, Indiana: Guild Press, 2001. [JK1899.S48 B65 2001](#)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2013.0259

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

May Wright Sewall (1844-1920), feminist, educator, and lecturer, was born in Milwaukee, the daughter of Philander W. Wright, a teacher, and Mary W. Wright. In 1866 she earned a bachelor's degree, and in 1868 a master's degree, from North Western Female College. She did some teaching in various places in the Midwest.

In 1872 she married Edwin W. Thompson, and moved with him to Indianapolis. He died in 1875. She became interested in woman suffrage, and attended a national convention in 1878. In 1880 she married Theodore Lovett Sewall, then head of a Boys' Classical School in Indianapolis. With him she founded and then headed the Girls' Classical School, for years one of the three leading girls' schools in Indianapolis. Mrs. Sewall was a charter member of the Art Association of Indianapolis, the Propylaeum, and the Contemporary Club. Through her life she assisted in campaigns for female suffrage in various Midwestern states.

Beginning in the 1890s she carried her feminist interests further abroad, being elected president of the National Congress of Women in 1891 and of the International Congress of Women in 1899. She began to combine this activity with working for peace. In 1904 she became chairman of the ICW standing committee on peace and arbitration, and in 1915 she chaired an Organized Conference of Women Workers to Promote Peace. In 1915 she sailed on the Oscar II as a member of Henry Ford's Peace Expedition.

In 1907 she sold the Girls Classical School to Anna Weaver, but was disappointed at the amount she received from the sale. Henceforward she depended for income mainly on lecturing, on women's rights, on peace and arbitration, and on psychic research. This last subject had been one of her interests since the 1880s, and she moved to a center on the subject at Eliot, Maine. In 1920 she wrote a book on her psychic experiences, *Neither Dead Nor Sleeping*. She also wrote books on The Higher Education of Women, on The Woman Suffrage Movement in Indiana, and on Women, World War and Permanent Peace.

Sources:

Hale Hester Anne. *May Wright Sewall, Avowed Feminist*, 1992--typescript (BV 2638).

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection contains three letters, two documents and two cased images. The letter of 10 May 1883 was written by Philips Brooks regarding his impressions of George Evans. The letters of 30 May 1894 by S. E. Moss in Indianapolis to General Horace Porter in Paris and 15 June 1900 by W.R. Holloway to Porter both are of introduction for May Wright Sewall. The document of 18 March 1891 appoints Sewall to the Board of World's Fair Managers of Indiana while the one of 4 June 1891 is State Department Passport for Mr. and Mrs. Sewall.

The two cased images from the 1860s are possibly of a young Sewall. Since no images of her could be located from the period, they cannot be authenticated but they bear a striking resemblance to her later portraits.

## **CONTENTS**

### CONTENTS

Letters (3)–1883, 1889, 1900

Documents (2)–1891

Cased Images–ca. 1860s

### CONTAINER

Folder 1

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Cased Image 1

Cased Image 2