

A Guide to the Cotton Family Correspondence, 1914-1915

Overview of the Collection

Repository: Newport Restoration Foundation, 680 Bellevue Avenue, Newport, RI 02840. Tel: (401) 849-7300, website: www.newportrestoration.org

Title: The Cotton Family Correspondence, 1914-1915

Creators: Georgia Dvorak Cotton, William H. Cotton

Extent: .5 linear feet, 63 items

Dates: 1914-1915

Media: correspondence

Identification: A2024.007

Language: English

Biographical Note

William Henry Cotton was an American portrait artist, caricaturist, and playwright. He was born in Newport, RI on July 22, 1880. Cotton studied at the Cowles Art School in Boston and at the Académie Julian in Paris. He was a member of the National Association of Portrait Painters and of the Newport Art Association. His portraits were exhibited at the National Academy of Design in New York, the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, and other galleries. Cotton also worked as an illustrator for both *Vanity Fair* and *The New Yorker*, which gained him recognition for his caricatures. In 1931 a comedy he wrote, "The Bride the Sun Shines On," was produced by the New York Repertory Company at the Fulton Theatre in New York. Cotton passed away on January 5, 1958, in Sergeantsville, New Jersey.

Georgia Dvorak was born in Nebraska in 1883. She married William H. Cotton in 1914 in New York. The couple lived in Brooklyn, NY and spent time in Newport, RI. They later moved to New Jersey. Georgia's great grandfather was the brother of the composer Antonín Dvořák. She died on April 7, 1949.

The Cotton House, located at 32 Church Street in Newport, RI., is named after Dr. Charles Cotton, the grandfather of William H. Cotton. Dr. Cotton served as a surgeon aboard the *USS Constitution*. The house was occupied by various members of the

Cotton family for 157 years. It was acquired by the Newport Restoration Foundation in 1977.

Scope and Content

The Cotton Family Correspondence consists of 63 letters written by William H. Cotton (1880-1958) and Georgia Dvorak Cotton (1883-1949) between 1914 and 1915. The majority of the letters were written by William and addressed to Georgia. The remainder were written by Georgia and sent to her mother-in-law Elizabeth Clark Hazard Cotton (1849-1936), and sister-in-law Mary E. Cotton (b. 1878).

The letters primarily document the lives of William and Georgia during the first year of their marriage. William frequently discusses his career as a portrait artist and details the progress of a painting commissioned by members of the Van Anders family. He often refers to Georgia by her nickname “Smudgie”. In her writings Georgia describes her social life and her enjoyment of married life. She discusses the furnishing of her and William’s home, various social gatherings, and often mentions the price of groceries.

The contents of this collection have been arranged chronologically. Undated materials have been arranged alphabetically.

Administrative Information

Access: Any qualified person doing personal or scholarly research is permitted to utilize materials in the Cotton Family Correspondence.

Preferred Citation: Title or Description of Item, Date, A2024.007, Box Number, Folder Number, Cotton Family Correspondence, Newport Restoration Foundation, 680 Bellevue Ave, Newport, RI 02840 www.newportrestoration.org

Provenance: These papers were found in the Newport Restoration Archives in 2024. It is suspected that they were either found in the Cotton House or that they were purchased by NRF.

Processed by: Caleb Goodhouse, 2025

Subject Terms:

Courtship--1910-1920

Domestic life--United States--1910-1920

Marriage--1910-1920.

Rhode Island--Social life and customs.

People:

Cotton, Elizabeth Clark Hazard, 1849-1936

Cotton, Georgia Dvorak, 1883-1949

Cotton, William H. (William Henry), 1880-

Cotton, Mary E., b. 1878

Related Materials: At the time of writing the author is unaware of any distinct collections directly related to William H. Cotton and Georgia Dvorak. However, scholars interested in the Dvorak and Cotton families may wish to also consult with the Newport Historical Society, *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, and the various museums and galleries that displayed Cotton's artwork.

Researchers interested in the Cotton House located at 32 Church Street in Newport, RI may also wish to consult the Newport Restoration Foundation's property and administrative record collections.

Contents Listing

Box	Folder	Description	Dates
1	1	Georgia Dvorak to Elizabeth Hazard & Mary Cotton	September 20, 1914
1	2	William H. Cotton to Elizabeth Hazard	September 29, 1914
1	3	Marriage Announcement	September 29, 1914
1	4	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	September 30, 1914

1	5	Georgia Dvorak to Elizabeth Hazard & Mary Cotton	October 2, 1914
1	6	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	October 2, 1914
1	7	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	October 6, 1914
1	8	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	October 18, 1914
1	9	Georgia Dvorak to Elizabeth Hazard & Mary Cotton	November 1, 1914
1	10	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	January 6, 1915
1	11	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	January 14, 1915
1	12	William H. Cotton to Elizabeth Hazard	January 17, 1915
1	13	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	February 14, 1915
1	14	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	February 28, 1915
1	15	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	March 7, 1915
1	16	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	March 15, 1915
1	17	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	March 28, 1915
1	18	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	April 8, 1915
1	19	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	May 2, 1915
1	20	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	May 9, 1915
1	21	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	May 17, 1915
1	22	Georgia Dvorak to Elizabeth Hazard	undated
1	23	Georgia Dvorak to Elizabeth Hazard & Mary Cotton	undated
1	24	Georgia Dvorak to "Gar Gar" & Mary Cotton	undated
1	25	Georgia Dvorak to Mary Cotton	undated
1	26	Georgia Dvorak to "You Dearest of Little Women"	undated
1	27	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	undated
1	28	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	undated
1	29	William H. Cotton to Georgia Dvorak	undated