

Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson Willett family genealogy and photographs

Descriptive Summary

Repository:	Georgia Historical Society
Creator:	Willett, Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson, 1841-1932.
Title:	Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson Willett family genealogy and photographs
Dates:	circa 1861-circa 1938
Extent:	1.0 cubic feet (3 boxes)
Identification:	MS 1666

Biographical/Historical Note

The family tree of Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson Willett (July 30, 1841 - December 19, 1932) begins with the Salzburgers who settled in Ebenezer at Effingham County, Georgia, which is where much of her family remained. Melissa is the daughter of Amos Rahn (June 1, 1809 - January 20, 1883) and Anna Elizabeth Dasher Rahn (July 10, 1816 - November 6, 1866). Melissa Rahn married William C. Dawson (1827 - September 20, 1870) on November 23, 1859 and had two children: William Horace Dawson and Gussie Dawson, who later became Sister Ignatius of Atlanta. Following the death of William C. Dawson, Melissa Rahn Dawson married George M. Willett. George was the engineer of the City and Suburban Railway that ran from Isle of Hope into Savannah. Melissa and George had at least one child, Daisy Willett. The Rahn-Dawson-Willett families were engaged as merchants, ministers, teachers, and school administrators. The Rahn family emerged as a very large, well-respected family within the Chatham and Effingham County area. Their family grew through marriage to include the names Dawson, Willett, Robertson, Armstrong, and Wright among others.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of genealogical materials concerning the family of Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson Willett. The extensive genealogical listing in this collection traces her family back to her great-grandparents, Conrad and Barbara Rahn. The Rahn-Dawson-Willett collection consists of detailed genealogical information found in a notebook with hand-written information as well as obituaries clipped from Savannah area newspapers. Also included in the collection are the prayer book and hymnal of Cecil Robertson, newspaper clippings dating from 1911 to 1938 mostly pertaining to Georgia History, an Historical Essay contest brochure, Confederate money in \$100 denominations, genealogical papers and a typed family record of the Rahn Family, and a program for a banquet honoring William Howard Taft.

Also included in the collection are photographs, circa 1861-circa 1930, including daguerreotypes, tintypes, and ambrotypes. The majority of the photographs are well labeled with some genealogical information on the back of the photograph. The earliest photographs are of Amos and Anne Elizabeth Dasher Rahn. The two were married in 1863, so it is assumed that these photographs may date from around that year.

The boxes containing photographs are noted as "VM" (visual materials) in the collection inventory.

Index Terms

- Ambrotypes (photographs)
- Cased photographs.
- Daguerreotypes (photographs)
- Dawson family.
- Ebenezer (Effingham County, Ga.)
- Effingham County (Ga.)
- Genealogies (histories)
- Photographs.

Rahn family.
Robertson family.
Salzburgers--Georgia.
Tintypes (prints)
Willett family.
Willett, Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson, 1841-1932.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Unknown.

Preferred Citation

[item identification], Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson Willett family genealogy and photographs, MS 1666, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Elizabeth Knowlton, 2001.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Separated Material

Artifacts were separated and cataloged with the Georgia Historical Society Artifacts Collection. View digital images of artifacts at the end of this collection inventory or search the Digital Image Catalog for further information.

Sponsorship

Encoding funded by a 2012 Documenting Democracy grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Container List

Box Fldr

1 1 Hand-written genealogical papers; typed record of the Rahn family (5 items)

- 2 Notebook with hand-written genealogical information related to the Rahn-Dawson-Willett families and obituaries clipped from local newspapers; papers listing births and deaths in the families (6 items)
- 3 Newspaper clipping dated 1911 to 1938, the majority of which are related to Georgia history (20 items)
- 4 Program for the banquet honoring William Howard Taft
- 5 Historical Essay contest brochure; Confederate note from Savannah Bank (4 items)
- 6 Prayer book and hymnal of Cecil Robertson; labels from photographs

vm_box Fldr

- 1 1 Anne Elizabeth Dasher Rahn (3 items)

vm_box Fldr

- 1 2 Daisy Willett (3 items)

vm_box Fldr

- 1 3 Melissa Henrietta Rahn Dawson Willett (10 items)

vm_box Fldr

- 1 4 William C. Dawson (2 items) **View online.**
Online Inventory Contains Digitized Items

vm_box Fldr

- 1 5 Nell Dawson, 5; Nell Dawson and Cecil, 1 (6 items)

vm_box Fldr

- 1 6 William Horace Dawson (3 items)

vm_box Fldr

1 7 James Rahn (3 items)

vm_box Fldr

1 8 Marjorie Ann Miller; Jim Rahn; George M. Willett; 117 E. Henry St.; Edith Dawson; Mrs. Walter Raheda; Amos Rahn (7 items)

vm_box Fldr

1 9 Group picture of William Dawson, Melissa Dawson, Gussie Dawson, and William Horace Dawson; group picture of George M. Willett, Melissa Dawson, and Leona Pace; group picture of Melissa Rahn Dawson, William Horace Dawson, and possible Gussie Dawson (3 items) **View online.**

Online Inventory Contains Digitized Items

vm_box Fldr

2 10 Sarah Robertson, 2; Cecil Robertson; Cecil and Sarah Robertson (4 items)

vm_box Fldr

2 11 Sister Ignatius (Gussie Dawson), 2; Melissa R. Dawson , Gussie Dawson (3 items)

vm_box Fldr

2 12 Unidentified photographs (5 items)

Artifacts

A-1666-001 One hundred dollar bill issued by the Confederate States of America **View online.**

A-1666-002 One hundred dollar bill issued by the Confederate States of America **View online.**

A-1666-003 Bill for seventy-five cents issued by the Bank of Savannah **View online.**