

# Guide to the Helen Howard Stevens and Sarah Martha Robinson Stevens Letters

WA MSS S-4539



Sarah Lerner

February 2023

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** WA MSS S-4539

**CREATOR:** Stevens, Helen Howard, 1878-1912

**TITLE:** Helen Howard Stevens and Sarah Martha Robinson Stevens Letters

**DATES:** 1902-1939

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English (Latin script)

**SUMMARY:** Collection of 115 manuscript letters by or relating to Helen Howard Stevens and her daughter Sarah Martha "Dixie" Robinson Stevens in Kalispell, Montana, 1902-1939. Early letters, 1902-1912, document the courtship of Helen Stevens and Jess Hayes Stevens, their domestic and family life, and the childhoods of Dixie Stevens and John Howard Stevens. They also include Helen Howard Stevens' experiences as a teacher and Jess Stevens' work as a lawyer, as well as the former's observations of the Flathead Indian Reservation. Letters also relate to Helen Stevens' death from typhoid and the family's subsequent bereavement. Jess Stevens' comments on African Americans, Chinese laborers, and indigenous peoples in Montana appear multiple times in the letters. Later letters, 1924-1937, document Dixie Stevens' relationships with friends and family, as well as her membership to the Order of the Eastern Star. The collection also includes newspaper clippings, a photograph of the steamboat *Klondike* on Flathead Lake, Montana, and other papers relating to the Masonic Temple in Kalispell.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.hhstevens>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.hhstevens>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from McBride Rare books on the William Robertson Coe Fund No. 3, 2022.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The Helen Howard Stevens and Sarah Martha Robinson Stevens Letters is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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### Preferred Citation

Helen Howard Stevens and Sarah Martha Robinson Stevens Letters. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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### Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Manuscript Unit Processing Manual.

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## Biographical / Historical

Helen Howard Stevens (1878-1912) was born in Barnett, Georgia, to Colonel George Washington Howard (1846-1925) and Sarah "Sallie" M. Robinson Howard (1855-1886). She attended Kirkwood High School in Kirkwood, Georgia, and from 1905 to 1906, she was a schoolteacher in Kalispell, Montana.

In 1907, she married Jess Hayes Stevens (1877-1939), an attorney in Kalispell, and they had two children: Sarah Martha "Dixie" Robinson Stevens (1907-1993) and John Howard Stevens (1910-1928).

Helen Stevens died at Kalispell in 1912 from typhoid fever.

Dixie Stevens died in 1993 in Atlanta, Georgia.

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## Scope and Contents

Collection of 115 manuscript letters by or relating to Helen Howard Stevens and her daughter Sarah Martha "Dixie" Robinson Stevens in Kalispell, Montana, 1902-1939.

Early letters, 1902-1912, document the courtship of Helen Stevens and Jess Hayes Stevens, their domestic and family life, and the childhoods of Dixie Stevens and John Howard Stevens. They also include Helen

Howard Stevens' experiences as a teacher and Jess Stevens' work as a lawyer, as well as the former's observations of the Flathead Indian Reservation. Letters also relate to Helen Stevens' death from typhoid and the family's subsequent bereavement. Jess Stevens' comments on African Americans, Chinese laborers, and indigenous peoples in Montana appear multiple times in the letters.

Later letters, 1924-1937, document Dixie Stevens' relationships with friends and family, as well as her membership to the Order of the Eastern Star.

The collection also includes newspaper clippings, a photograph of the steamboat *Klondike* on Flathead Lake, Montana, and other papers relating to the Masonic Temple in Kalispell.

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## **Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	1902	1902
b. 1, f. 2	1904	1904
b. 1, f. 3	1905	1905
b. 1, f. 4-5	1906	1906
b. 1, f. 6-7	1907	1907
b. 1, f. 8	1908	1908
b. 1, f. 9-10	1909	1909
b. 1, f. 11-13	1910	1910
b. 1, f. 14-15	1911	1911
b. 1, f. 16-18	1912	1912
b. 2, f. 19	1924-1925	1924-1925
b. 2, f. 20	1930-1931	1930-1931
b. 2, f. 21-22	1932	1932
b. 2, f. 23	1933-1934	1933-1934
b. 2, f. 24	1936	1936
b. 2, f. 25	1937	1937
b. 2, f. 26	1939	1939
b. 2, f. 27	Undated	undated
b. 2, f. 28	Empty envelopes	undated
b. 2, f. 29	Newspaper clippings	1912, undated
b. 2, f. 30	Photograph of the steamboat <i>Klondike</i> on Flathead Lake, Montana	approximately 1910
b. 2, f. 31	Papers related to the Masonic Temple, Kalispell, Montana Includes "Souvenir Program Dedication of the Masonic Temple, Kalispell, Montana" and business cards for fellow Masons.	1914, undated

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

African Americans -- Montana  
Bereavement  
Chinese Americans -- Montana  
Chinese -- Montana  
Courtship  
Families -- Montana  
Freemasonry -- Montana  
Indians of North America -- Montana  
Lawyers -- Montana  
Race relations  
Salish Indians -- Montana  
Teachers -- Montana  
Typhoid fever -- Montana  
Women and freemasonry -- Montana  
Women -- West (U.S.)

### Contributors

Stevens, Helen Howard, 1878-1912  
Stevens, Sarah Martha Robinson, 1907-1993

### Acquired From

McBride Rare Books , bookseller

### Geographic Names

Flathead Indian Reservation (Mont.)  
Flathead Lake (Mont.) -- Pictorial works  
Kalispell (Mont.)  
Montana -- Social life and customs -- 20th  
Century

### Occupations

Teachers -- Montana -- 20th Century

### Genres / Formats

Photographs

### Names

Stevens, Jess Hayes, 1877-1939  
Stevens, John Howard, 1910-1928

### Corporate Body

Order of the Eastern Star

### Families

Stevens family