

NUCMC Catalog Record

Creator: Painter, Uriah Hunt, 1837-1900

Title: Uriah Hunt Painter papers

Date Created: 1859-1890

Extent: 29 boxes (13.5 linear ft.)

Location: Chester County Historical Society (West Chester, Pa.) (Ms. Coll. 174)

Biographical Data: Uriah Hunt Painter (5 Mar. 1837- 20 Oct. 1900) was a native of West Chester, Pa., and a journalist for the Philadelphia Inquirer during the Civil War. One of nine sons born to Samuel and Ann Vickers Painter, he was an active citizen and businessman in the community. His ventures in West Chester included a lumber company, an ice company, the West Chester Telegraph Company, the Delaware and Atlantic Telegraph and Telephone Company, and the West Chester Opera House at Horticultural Hall. Uriah Hunt Painter attended Oberlin College and there meet his wife, Belinda Avery, of Mansfield, Ohio. They were married on 4 Oct. 1862, and lived in Washington, D.C. The couple had two daughters, Ellen and Elise. Since his establishment in 1860 as a newspaper correspondent in Washington, D.C., Uriah was able to become acquainted with many of its citizens and emerged as an influential person in the town and government. He was a lobbyist and the Clerk of the House Committee on Post Roads and Post Offices. As a lobbyist, he was involved in legislation regarding the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. During this time he maintained his telegraph business in West Chester and Washington, D.C., and had additional lines constructed along the Union Pacific Railroad line. As a friend of Thomas Edison and Alexander G. Bell, he promoted their inventions throughout Washington, D.C., and West Chester. In 1884, he established West Chester's first telephone company, the Delaware and Atlantic Telephone and Telegraph Company. Painter was credited with two important reports during the Civil War. He was the first to publish the news in 1861 that the Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) had turned to defeat for the North, and he informed the Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in 1862 of the invasion of Maryland that was planned by Gen. Lee and his forces. The invasion resulted in the Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg). Before the Civil War, he attended the newly formed Republican Party Convention as one of the members of the press for the Chicago Republican and witnessed the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for the presidency. After his Civil War years, he was, on occasion, a correspondent for the New York Sun and the New York Tribune and built the Lafayette Square Opera House in Washington, D.C. He died in

1900 at his ocean house in West End, N.J., and was interred at Oaklands Cemetery in West Chester, Pa.

Notes: Cite as: Uriah Hunt Painter papers. Ms. Coll. 174. Library Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Finding aid available in the repository and on the Internet.

<http://www.chestercohistorical.org/>

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Gift (probable) of Uriah Hunt Painter's daughters, Mrs. Ellen P. Cunningham and Mrs. Elise P. Thornburg, 1948.

Related Collection: Painter Family Papers 1837-1922. Ms. Coll. 124

Summary: The collection spans the years from 1859-1890. It consists of personal and business correspondence, business records and ledgers, and scripts of telegrams that were sent and received. The main body of the collection consists of approximately 27,000 telegrams. Telegram topics include the Civil War (battles, draft and recruitment, war reports, and people) and civilian life (including social life, schools, business life, the telegraph and telephone industry, transportation, and politics).

Subjects: Painter, Uriah Hunt, 1837-1900--Archives.
Philadelphia inquirer.
Telegraph--United States.
Telephone--United States.
United States—History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Journalists.
United States—History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Press coverage.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.
United States--Social life and customs--19th century.
Business records.
Telegrams.
Businessmen—Pennsylvania--West Chester.
Journalists--United States.
War correspondents--Washington (D.C.)

Other Creators: West Chester Telegraph Company (West Chester, Pa.)