

Gettysburg College
Musselman
Library
special collections

Guide to MS-244:

George S. Patton, Jr. Family Memoir and Letters



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections and College Archives

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July 2019

MS-244: George S. Patton, Jr. Family Memoir and Letters

Processed by Jajuan K. Johnson, Class of 2021, Pohanka Intern
July 2019

Size

1 box, 0.5 cubic feet

Location

Special Collections

Dates

Inclusive: 1750-1927 (1903-1908 are the dates of the letters, all others show up in "My Father as I remembered him.")

Bulk: 1890-1907

Provenance

This collection was donated by Robert and Victoria Patton P '13 in December 2018.

Biographical Note

George Smith Patton Jr. (1885-1945) was born and raised in California. He attended the Virginia Military Institute from 1903-1904, then transferred to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Patton graduated from West Point in 1909 and became a Second Lieutenant in the Cavalry Branch of the United States Army. A year later, Patton married Beatrice Banning Ayer and they had three children, Beatrice Smith (1911), Ruth Ellen (1915), and George Patton IV (1923).

In 1912, Patton was selected as the Army's entry for the first Modern Pentathlon held in Stockholm, Sweden. He was proficient in marksmanship, horsemanship, swordsmanship, foot racing, and swimming, finishing fifth overall. He served on the border with John J. Pershing in 1915 pursuing Pancho Villa. After the United States entered World War I in 1917, Patton was assigned to Pershing's staff in the American Expeditionary Force. Patton was wounded in the leg a year later during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, while commanding a light tank brigade. He was later brevetted to Colonel in the Tank Corps and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. Following the end of World War I, Patton held many different assignments in New England and Hawaii.

In 1927, he wrote "*My Father as I remembered him.*" This memoir was written in memory of Patton's father; George S. Patton Sr. The book contains family history and personal memories from both the childhoods and adulthoods of Patton and his father. In 1931, Patton attended the Army War College and graduated in 1932. In 1940, Patton received the rank of Brigadier General, which was followed by Major General in 1941, and then by Lieutenant General in 1943. He was demoted to Major General in 1944 for

the “Mistreatment of Patients in Receiving Tents of the 15th and 93rd Evacuation Hospitals” involving two soldiers that were admitted for battle fatigue.

Patton was in command of a tank division throughout World War II during the North African Campaign, Sicily Campaign, Lorraine Campaign, and the advance into Germany, eventually gaining his lost rank along with the rank of General (four stars) in 1945.

Following the surrender of Germany, Patton returned home to visit his family and speak in Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, and Washington D.C. before returning to Europe. In December of 1945, Patton was involved in a car accident while on a hunting trip with Major General Hobart Gay. Patton was paralyzed and admitted in a hospital in Heidelberg, Germany. 12 days later, George Smith Patton Jr. died in his sleep of pulmonary edema and congestive heart failure, he is buried at the Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial.

Scope and Content Note

In Patton’s book *“My Father as I remembered him,”* he gives brief descriptions and stories about his family, starting with the first “Patton” and ending with himself in 1927. The first “Patton” was Robert William Patton, born in Ayrshire, Scotland around 1750, who became one of the first Virginia settlers in the 1770s. Robert Patton married Anne Gordon Mercer in 1797 and began the Patton Family lineage. Their son Robert Patton (father of George Smith Patton Sr. and Waller Tazewell Patton) was born in 1798. George S. Patton Sr. was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute Class of 1852 and a Colonel in the Confederate States of America from 1861-1864. His brother, Waller T. Patton was an 1855 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and a Colonel in the Confederate States of America from 1861-1863. He was killed at the Battle of Gettysburg. George Smith Patton, Jr., was born in 1856 and graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1877. He married Ruth Wilson and they became the parents of George S. Patton Jr in 1885. After holding the office of Mayor in San Marino, California from 1913-1922 and then 1922-1924, he retired and later died in 1927. The book is fully typed with handwritten annotations and corrections from George S. Patton Jr., with his initials at the top right hand corner of each page.

Subjects

American Civil War
Confederate States of America
Patton Family
Virginia Military Institute
West Point
World War I

Series Description

This collection is divided into two series. **Series I:** Patton Letters, **Series II:** “My Father as I remembered him.”

Series I contains George S. Patton Jr.'s letters to his Aunt "Nannie" and his mother from both VMI and West Point (1903-1908). Series II contains George S. Patton Jr.'s book "My Father as I remembered him.", which includes a biography of his father, George S. Patton, and a brief biography of other family members, including himself up to 1927.

Box List

Box 1

1-0 Finding Aid and Biographical Information

Series 1: Patton Letters

1-1 Letters to Aunt "Nannie" 1903-1906

- 12 December 1903, from V.M.I.
- 3 January 1904, from V.M.I.
- 5 January 1905, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 9 January 1905, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 8 January 1906, from West Point to The Brayton 62 Madison Ave N.Y. City

1-2 Letters to Aunt "Nannie" 1907-1908

- 7 January 1907, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 13 May 1907, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 9 September 1907, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 1 October 1907, from West Point to Hall Savoy 5th Ave + 59th St, N.Y. City
- 7 November 1907, from West Point to New York City
- 8 February, 1908, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 4 May 1908, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 31 December 1908, from West Point

1-3 Letters to Mrs. George S. Patton 1904-1907

- 30 August 1904, from West Point
- From George S. Patton to his Mother, undated
- 20 January 1907, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 7 April 1907, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 6 May 1907, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California
- 18 November 1907, from West Point to San Gabriel, Los Angeles, California

Series 2: "My Father as I remembered him."

1-4 "My Father as I remembered him."

- Biography of George S. Patton, written by his son, George S. Patton, Jr.
- Brief family history going back to the "first Patton" around 1750
- Brief childhood experience of George S. Patton Jr. and others up to 1927

Related Collections

1861 Navy Colt Revolver (modified & mounted) from the collection of General George S. Patton Jr. (2013-1216)

Saber carried by Col. George S. Patton CSA (2016-0034)

Contact Information

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