

2006

Edwin Markham Collection

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Guide to the Edwin Markham Collection

Processed by Anneliese Eisentraut

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Processed by:
Anneliese Eisentraut
Date Completed:
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Encoded by:
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Edwin Markham collection

Dates: 1898-1994

Bulk Dates: 1910-1940

Collection number: MSS-2005-10-01

Collector: SJSU Library Special Collections and Archives

Collection Size: 1 carton, 1 oversized box4 linear feet

Repository: San Jose State University. Library.

San Jose, California 95192-0028

Abstract: The Edwin Markham Collection (1898-1994) includes a variety of documents and photographs chronicling the life of Edwin Markham, noted poet and San Jose Normal School graduate. This artificial collection includes newspaper clippings, printed poems and pamphlets, photographs, and limited correspondence. The bulk of the material dates from 1910-1940.

Physical location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog

Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access

The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

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Processing Information

Processing completed by Anneliese Eisentraut, 2006. EAD encoding by Anneliese Eisentraut, 2006.

Biographical History

Charles Edward Anson Markham (1852-1940), later known as Edwin, was the youngest of nine children, born on April 23, 1852, in Oregon City, Oregon. His parents, Elizabeth Winchell and Samuel Markham, were married in Michigan and traveled by wagon train to settle in the Oregon Territory. His parents divorced shortly after his birth and his mother and her younger children moved to Suisun Hills, northeast of San Francisco.

Markham received his teacher's certificate in 1870 from the California College in Vacaville, graduated from San Jose State Normal School in 1872, and then studied classics at Christian College in Santa Rosa. After graduation, Markham taught in many communities across Central and Northern California. His first teaching position was in El Dorado County and in 1879 he was elected county superintendent of schools. In

1884, he was a school headmaster in Hayward, and in 1890, he was hired as the principal of the Tompkins Observation School in Oakland. After two brief failed marriages, Markham married Anna Catherine Murphy (1859-1938) in 1898 and in 1899 their son Virgil was born. The Markhams moved to New York and in 1901 settled on Staten Island where they would reside for the remainder of their lives.

Markham began writing poetry in the 1870s and first sold one of his poems in 1880. He later contributed to *Harper's Century*, *Scribner's Magazine*, and the *Overland Monthly*. He also developed friendships with literary celebrities such as Joaquin Miller, Ina Donna Coolbrith, William Dean Howells, and Ambrose Bierce.

Markham rose to fame as a poet with the publication of "The Man with the Hoe," which was inspired by a Francois Millet woodcut of the same name. On New Year's Eve of 1898, Markham read the poem at a party, which led to its publication in the *San Francisco Examiner*. Because Markham's populist views were in line with the social reform movements of the day, his poem became an overnight sensation.

His second-most famous poem, "Lincoln, the Man of the People" was commissioned for the centennial of Lincoln's birth and was published in 1901 in *Lincoln and Other Poems*. In 1922 Markham read the poem at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial. Although Markham's later works failed to receive the critical acclaim of "The Man with the Hoe" and "Lincoln, the Man of the People," he was a popular figure who lectured and made public appearances at a range of events, including labor and radical gatherings as well as literary ones.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Edwin Markham Collection (1898-1994) includes a variety of documents and photographs chronicling the life of Edwin Markham, noted poet and San Jose Normal School graduate. The varied clippings in the collection indicate the depth of local and national interest in his career and the esteem in which he was held at SJSU. Secondary subjects represented in the collection include Markham's wife and son, the Markham Cottage on the SJSU campus, and the Poetry Society of America.

This artificial collection includes materials from multiple sources, many of which are unidentified. A portion of the collection was given to the university as a bequest from the C.W. Thomas family, local residents and friends of the Markham family. The collection is organized in one series with a subject-based hierarchical structure. Materials in the collection include newspaper clippings, printed poems and pamphlets, photographs, and limited correspondence. The bulk of the material dates from 1910-1940.

Arrangement

The collection is organized in one series with a subject-based hierarchical structure.

Subject Headings

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Markham, Edwin 1852-1940

Poets, American--19th century

San Jose State University--History

San Jose State Teachers College

Box 1-2

Series 1: Correspondence and Printed Matter 1898-1994 1910-1940

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series is arranged chronologically by subject and format. The bulk of the collection relates to Edwin Markham and includes biographical information, newspaper clippings and select correspondence. The remainder of the collection includes correspondence from Anna C. Markham and Virgil Markham, miscellaneous printed materials and correspondence about Markham at SJSU.

Notable items in the series include a letter from Markham to the Thomas family informing them of Anna Catherine's death, two letters from Markham to the poet Henry Meade Bland, several signed poems, and family photographs.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically by subject and format.

Box/Folder 1-1

Edwin Markham--Biographical Information 1939-1952

Box/Folder 1-2

Edwin Markham--Clippings 1899-1942 1952 1979 1991

Box/Folder 1-3

Edwin Markham--Clippings, Undated circa 1910-1942

Box/Folder 1-4

Edwin Markham--Correspondence 1898 1909-1929 1938

Box/Folder 1-5

Edwin Markham--Photographs circa 1910-1935

Box/Folder 1-6

Edwin Markham--Poems, Signed 1920-1930 1937

Box/Folder 1-7

Edwin Markham--Poems 1900-1932

Box/Folder 1-8

Edwin Markham--Printed Matter 1905-1933

Box/Folder 1-9	Anna Catherine Markham 1899-1938
Box/Folder 1-10	Virgil Markham circa 1901 1928
Box/Folder 1-11	Markham House 1916 1924 1927 1937 1953 1965 1976 1979
Box/Folder 1-12	Poetry Society of America 1921-1925
Box/Folder 1-13	Miscellaneous Correspondence 1909 1947-1948 1964 1994
Box: 2	Oversized--Photos, Clippings and Framed Items circa 1900-1940