

# Guide to the Dan De Quille Papers

WA MSS S-2667



by Matthew Daniel Mason

May 2011

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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-2667

**CREATOR:** De Quille, Dan, 1829-1898

**TITLE:** Dan De Quille papers

**DATES:** circa 1860-circa 1956

**BULK DATES:** 1885-1898

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1 linear foot (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** This collection consists chiefly of papers created and collected by Dan De Quille that document a portion of his writing career, circa 1860-1898, as well as a small quantity of material accumulated by his family from 1936 to circa 1956. The papers consist of correspondence, writings, photographs, and ephemera, as well as newspaper clippings collected by De Quille on a variety of subjects.

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

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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.dequille>.

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

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from the William Reese Company on William Robertson Coe Fund No. 3, 2010.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Dan De Quille Papers 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

Dan De Quille Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

The description for the collection derives chiefly from a list provided by the dealer, which the processing archivist compared to the collection contents and augmented when appropriate. The material was removed from three-ring binders and rehoused in archival folders and boxes.

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## Dan De Quille (1829-1898)

William Wright (1829-1898), better known by the pen name Dan De Quille, was an American author, journalist, and humorist. He was born in Knox County, Ohio, the oldest of nine children. In 1849, he moved west with his family to West Liberty, Iowa, where he married Caroline Coleman (1829-1912) in 1853. They had five children, two of whom died in infancy. Their surviving children were Mell Wright Evans (1855-1906), Lura "Lou" Gertrude Wright (1856-1928), and Paxson George Wright (1858-1929).

In 1857, Wright traveled alone to California and prospected for gold in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and in the Mono Lake region. In 1859, he moved to the silver mining town of Virginia City, Nevada, which extracted its mineral wealth from the Comstock Lode, the first major discovery of silver ore in the United States. In 1862, Wright began writing for the *Daily Territorial Enterprise* newspaper in Virginia City and adopted the pen name Dan De Quille. He remained on the staff of the newspaper for over thirty years and wrote extensively about the people, events, and mining operations in the region. From August 1863 to May 1864, he supervised the work of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), who adopted the pen name Mark Twain while writing for the newspaper.

In 1874, a group of mine operators in Virginia City approached De Quille to write a history of the Comstock Lode. Working in Hartford, Connecticut, under the editorship of Mark Twain, he wrote *A History of the Big Bonanza* (American Publishing Company, 1876).

Near the end of his life, De Quille returned to West Liberty, Iowa.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection consists chiefly of papers created and collected by Dan De Quille that document a portion of his writing career, circa 1860-1898, as well as a small quantity of material accumulated by his family from 1936 to circa 1956. The papers consist of correspondence, writings, photographs, and ephemera, as well as newspaper clippings collected by De Quille on a variety of subjects.

The correspondence in the collection encompasses letters from editors and publishers to De Quille about his writing, as well as a small quantity of letters written by De Quille to his daughter Mell Wright Evans and

sister Louisa G. Wright Stevens. There is also a small group of correspondence about De Quille between his granddaughter Irma Evans Morris and Nevada historian Effie Mona Mack in 1936.

Writings by De Quille include a notebook with outlines, drafts, and notes for stories and articles. Other writings include draft manuscripts for articles about Virginia City and California, as well as about Peru, and tales based in the Middle East.

Photographs in the collection include portraits of De Quille and views of his gravesite. Ephemera in the collection includes scrapbook sheets with illustrations that De Quille clipped from magazines and newspapers to present to his granddaughter.

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## **Arrangement**

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, circa 1860-1953. II. Writings, 1876-circa 1956. III. Photographs, circa 1885-circa 1930. IV. Other Papers, 1875-1898.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1863-1953

0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Series I is organized into three subseries: Correspondence from De Quille, Correspondence to De Quille, and Third-Party Correspondence.

#### Outgoing

Arranged alphabetically by the recipient.

b. 1, f. 1	Authors' Alliance	1892 July 18
b. 1, f. 2-11	Evans, Mell Wright Mell Wright Evans (1855-1906) was a daughter of De Quille. She was married to Frank Algerman Evans (born 1852).	1888 November 26-1893 January 24, undated
b. 1, f. 12	Stevens, Louisa G. Wright Louisa G. Wright Stevens (born 1843) was a younger sister of De Quille. She was married to Frank W. Stevens.	undated

#### Incoming

Arranged alphabetically by the author.

b. 1, f. 13	American Press Association	1891 October 13
b. 1, f. 14	Applegate, Josiah H.	1863 November 2
b. 1, f. 15	Bachelor & Johnson Newspaper Syndicate	1891 June 1
b. 1, f. 16	Barnes, E. D. Includes clippings from the <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i> related to mining engineer Philip Deidesheimer (1832-1916).	1875 January 13
b. 1, f. 17	Browne, J. Ross Letter of introduction for De Quille to Harper & Brothers publishers.	1875 May 17
b. 1, f. 18	<i>California Illustrated Magazine</i>	1893 August 23-November 24
b. 1, f. 19	Clare, Ada	circa 1860-1866
b. 1, f. 20	Clark, Hiram C.	1862 November 22
b. 1, f. 21	<i>Cosmopolitan Magazine</i>	1895 May 21
b. 1, f. 22	Crawford, James	1875 July 7
b. 1, f. 23	Cummings, Amos Jay	1891 April 6-October 22
b. 1, f. 24	D. Appleton & Company	1895 August 2

## Incoming (continued)

b. 1, f. 25	Daggett, Rollin Mallory Unsigned letter, based on its contents, it is possibly by Rollin Mallory Daggett (1831-1901), editor-in-chief of the <i>Territorial Enterprise</i> newspaper in Virginia City, Nevada, 1873-1878.	1875 September 9
b. 1, f. 26	Driscoll, Dennis	1863 February 27
b. 1, f. 27	<i>Engineering and Mining Journal</i>	1891 September 14-1897 February 10
b. 1, f. 28	Fair, James Graham	1885 May 6
b. 1, f. 29	Goodman, Joseph T.	1863 September 26
b. 1, f. 30	Hardy, Arthur Sherburne	circa 1893-1895
b. 1, f. 31	Hodgson, Richard	1893 August 22
b. 1, f. 32-34	Lawrence, Joseph E.	1863 September 23–circa 1865
b. 1, f. 35	Lester, Lirle?	undated
b. 1, f. 36	Lorborn Publishing Company	1887 December 5-1888 April 12
b. 1, f. 37	Marshall, G. M.	1864 June 30
b. 1, f. 38	McClure, Samuel Sidney	1891 March 5
b. 1, f. 39	Mining and Scientific Press	1895 December 30-1896 February 7
b. 1, f. 40	<i>New York Herald</i>	1895 May 18-1896 March 5
b. 1, f. 41	<i>Once a Week</i>	1892 December 27-1893 February 15
b. 1, f. 42	Preston, Laura	1865 May 16
b. 1, f. 43	<i>Rocky Mountain News</i>	1895 December 25
b. 1, f. 44	Romance Publishing Company	circa 1890
b. 1, f. 45	<i>San Francisco Call</i>	1895 June 11-1896 February 4
b. 1, f. 46	Scribner, Elizabeth Emmeline Brewster Elizabeth Emmeline Brewster Scribner (born 1837) was the wife of Eben Scribner (circa 1840-1894), a mining amalgamator in Dayton, Nevada.	1875 October 21

## Incoming (continued)

b. 1, f. 47	Sharon, William	1875 May 10
b. 1, f. 48	<i>Sunday Mercury</i>	1874 November 15
b. 1, f. 49	Taylor, Howard P.	1863 January 15
b. 1, f. 50	Union Hall Hotel, Hartford, Connecticut	1875 August 12
b. 1, f. 51	Utah Press Association	1895 August 9
b. 1, f. 52	Wagoner, Hank	1875 April 4
b. 1, f. 53	Wilcox, George E.	1895 November 4
b. 1, f. 54	Worthington, Alfred D.	1893 November 18-December 1
Third-Party Correspondence Arranged alphabetically by name.		
b. 1, f. 55	Mack, Effie Mona, to Morris, Irma Evans	1936 May 10-October 6
b. 1, f. 56	Morris, Irma Evans, to Mack, Effie Mona	1936 October 18
b. 1, f. 57	Tilton, Cecil G., to Morris, Irma Evans	1953 November 15



**Series II: Writings, 1876-circa 1956***18 Folders*

Writings by De Quille and others.

Series II is organized into three subseries: Notebook, Drafts, and Writings by Others.

b. 2, f. 58	Notebook Comprised chiefly of aphorisms and ideas for articles and stories. Includes an autograph copy of a letter by Mark Twain in the hand of De Quille about telepathy, March 29, 1875, as well as a story, "An Alaskan Legend."	1880 December 26-circa 1890
	Drafts Arranged alphabetically by title followed by notes and a drawing.	
b. 2, f. 59	"Arabian Nights Story," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 60	"The Blizaard," autograph manuscript poem	undated
b. 2, f. 61	"Golden Back-Bone of the World," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 62	"Golden Back-Bone of the World," untitled autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 63	"Little Biggs and Old Bedrock," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 64	"Mineral Verve," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 65	"Nevada's Great Placer Field," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 66	"The Nizam of Zim-Zim," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 67	"Peru," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 68	"The Washoe Club," autograph manuscript	undated
b. 2, f. 69	Untitled autograph manuscript Discussion of animal husbandry in the Washoe Valley, Nevada, including cattle and raising geese to produce foie gras.	undated
b. 2, f. 70	Notes Brief notes on a variety of subjects, including mining in California, contents of a proposed book, and translation of a French phrase.	undated
b. 2, f. 71	Pencil sketch of a dog	undated
	Writings by Others Arranged chronologically.	
b. 2, f. 72	Lawrence, Joseph E., Untitled poem	1876 February 8
b. 2, f. 73	Unidentified, "Memories of Washoe, Nevada, 1853-1859"	circa 1895
b. 2, f. 74	Unidentified, Transcription of quotes about De Quille Quotes by Charles Corwin Goodwin, Joseph Goodman, and Wells Drury	circa 1950

Writings by Others (continued)

b. 2, f. 75

Unidentified, Transcription of an excerpt about De Quille from Irving Stone, circa 1956  
*Men to Match My Mountains: The Opening of the Far West 1840-1900*  
(Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1956.)

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**Series III: Photographs, circa 1885-circa 1930***3 Folders*

Photographs collected by De Quille and his family.

Arranged chronologically.

b. 2, f. 76	J. B. Blanchard & Co., Portrait of Dan De Quille James Brainard Blanchard (1837-1903) owned and operated the J. B. Blanchard & Co. in Los Angeles, California, circa 1880-1902.	circa 1885
b. 2, f. 77	Werts, Perry D., Portrait of Dan De Quille Perry D. Werts (1857-1916) was a photographer in Iowa City, Iowa.	circa 1885
b. 2, f. 78	Gravesite of De Quille in Oak Ridge Cemetery, West Liberty, Iowa	circa 1930

**Series IV: Other Papers, 1875-circa 1898***16 Folders*

Series IV is organized into two subseries: Ephemera and Newspaper Clippings.

## Ephemera

Ephemera collected and created by De Quille.

Arranged chronologically

b. 2, f. 79	Ticket to a clam-bake at Katama in Edgartown, Massachusetts	1875 August 22
b. 4 Oversize, f. 91	Scrapbook sheets	circa 1891

## Newspaper Clippings

Newspaper clippings collected by De Quille and his heirs. The bulk of the clippings document topics related to Alaska, economics, and scientific subjects, with smaller quantities of clippings about other topics.

Arranged alphabetically by topic followed by oversize clippings.

b. 3, f. 80	Alaska	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 81	Economics	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 82	History	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 83	Humor	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 84	International	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 85	Mining	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 86	National expansion	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 87	Nevada	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 88	Obituaries of De Quille	1898
b. 3, f. 89	Scientific subjects	circa 1880-1895
b. 3, f. 90	Social critiques	circa 1880-1895

## Oversize newspaper clippings

b. 4 Oversize, f. 92	Alaska	circa 1880-1895
b. 4 Oversize, f. 93	Obituaries of De Quille	1898
b. 4 Oversize, f. 94	Scientific subjects	circa 1880-1895
b. 4 Oversize, f. 95	Superstition	1883-1888

## **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**

Authors, American -- 1885-1898 -- Archives  
Frontier and pioneer life -- California  
Frontier and pioneer life -- Nevada  
Frontier and pioneer life -- Sierra Nevada  
Region (Calif. and Nev.)  
Journalists  
Mines and mineral resources -- Nevada  
Newspaper editors  
Silver mines and mining -- Nevada

### **Geographic Names**

California -- Description and travel  
Comstock Lode (Nev.)  
Nevada  
Peru  
Sierra Nevada (Calif. and Nev.)  
Virginia City (Nev.)  
West (U.S.) -- Social life and customs

### **Genres / Formats**

Photographic prints  
Scrapbooks

### **Names**

De Quille, Dan, 1829-1898  
De Quille, Dan, 1829-1898 -- Pictorial works  
Evans, Mell Wright, 1855-1906  
Mack, Effie Mona  
Morris, Irma Evans  
Stevens, Louisa G. Wright, b. 1843