

Archives and Special Collections

Dickinson College

Carlisle, PA

**COLLECTION REGISTER**

Name: **Collins, Charles (1813-1875)** **MC 2003.6**

Material: Family Papers (1831-1890)

Volume: 1 linear foot (Document Boxes 1-2, 1 Oversized Folder, 1 Oversized Box)

Donation: Gift of Charles Collins, 1963

Usage: These materials have been donated without restrictions on usage.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Charles Collins was born on April 17, 1813 in North Yarmouth, Maine to Joseph Warren and Hannah Sturdivant Collins. He prepared for college at the Maine Wesleyan Seminary and graduated from Wesleyan University in 1837 with the highest honors in his class. Following graduation, Collins began his career in education by serving as the principal of a high school in Augusta, Maine for one year. In 1838, he relocated to western Virginia where he became the first president, as well as treasurer and professor of natural sciences, at Emory and Henry College.

While in Virginia, Charles Collins met school teacher Harriet Newell Hart and they married in 1841. Harriet was born on August 10, 1820 near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The couple had ten children, seven of whom are known, including Narcissa Collins, Charles S. Collins, Wilbur Fisk Collins, Harriet Collins Lamb, Mary L. Nale, James Marshall Collins, Hannah Elizabeth Barton, John Stone Hart Collins, and Lily Collins. Several of the children, including Narcissa, Wilbur, and Lily, died at a young age.

Collins developed a strong reputation as an educator within the Methodist Church and throughout his lifetime received several honorary degrees, as well as numerous offers to lead church-related colleges and female seminaries. In 1851, Dickinson College granted Collins an honorary doctor of divinity degree and on July 7, 1852 elected him to serve as the College's eleventh president. During his eight years in Carlisle, the young president increased enrollment, improved the College's physical plant, and became involved in the temperance movement. Collins also traveled extensively to preach and attend church conferences, where he attempted to gather financial support for Dickinson.

In 1860, President Collins resigned from his position at Dickinson, citing his desire to explore ways to make further provisions for his growing family. He purchased the State Female College near Memphis, Tennessee, and the family relocated to the South just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. With the exception of the interruption caused by the war, Collins

oversaw the State Female College's operation until his death on July 10, 1875. His wife, Harriet, continued to run the school until 1884, when the institution changed hands. Harriet Newell Hart Collins died on March 13, 1889.

## COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Charles Collins collection is housed in two document boxes, one oversized folder, and one oversized box. It has been organized into six series: Correspondence, Journals, Miscellaneous, Sermons, Diplomas, and Scrapbooks.

The Correspondence series includes two letters of condolence sent to Harriet Newell Hart Collins upon the death of Charles Collins in 1875 and two letters from James Marshall Collins to his sister "Lizzie." They are arranged alphabetically by author and then chronologically.

The Journal series is the largest in the collection and includes six diaries and notebooks kept by Charles Collins between 1831 and 1872. They are arranged chronologically. The journals address his preparatory school and college experiences, his family life, and his role as administrator at Emory and Henry, Dickinson, and the State Female College. The majority of the entries are personal reflections or detailed notes about sermons preached by Collins and other clergy. Collins also transcribed a number of letters in his journal, particularly those that related to job offers from various colleges, as well as the purchase and establishment of the State Female College. Entries from his student days include financial accounts, writing assignments, newspaper clippings, poetry, lines of scripture and proverbs in English, Greek and Latin. The diaries he began in 1842 and 1855 include the genealogies of both his and his wife's families. The 1842 diary also contains accounts of all of the marriages that Collins performed throughout his career, including the marriages of several of his children. Entries from the 1860s refer to the effects that the Civil War had upon the family and the State Female College.

The Miscellaneous series includes a note in which Charles Collins records a prediction made by his friend, Wiley, on Nov. 5, 1835 regarding Collins' career.

The Sermons series includes published and unpublished sermons written by Charles Collins. They are arranged chronologically with an undated sermon placed in the front. Collins' notes and drafts include the date and location of each instance in which he preached his sermons. The published pieces include a pamphlet and two bound volumes that contain sermons by Charles Collins and other Methodist ministers dating from 1848 to 1853.

The Diplomas series contains three diplomas of Charles Collins from Maine Wesleyan Seminary and Wesleyan University. They have been designated as Oversized Folders - OC 2003.6 and are arranged chronologically.

The Scrapbooks series consists of a scrapbook and loose clippings kept by Charles Collins' children, Narcissa Collins and John Stone Hart Collins. Narcissa began the scrapbook prior to her death in 1862, and her brother John continued the project in 1870. Loose clippings have been placed in a separate folder. The contents are primarily poetry clippings, many of which were written by Dickinson College students. There are also a number of newspaper clippings dealing with trivia and human interest stories. This series also includes a small amount of memorabilia from John Stone Hart Collins' years at the University of Mississippi and elementary school progress reports for Rufus E. Shapley, a Dickinson graduate who appears to have been friends with Narcissa Collins. Due to the size of these items, they are housed separately in an oversized box and are designated as OC 2003.6.

## COLLECTION INVENTORY

### BOX 1 - MC 2003.6

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Collins, Harriet Newell Hart

- Folder 01) Letter of condolence from her brother, John Hart - Aug. 1, 1875  
Letter of condolence from her uncle, John Stone - Aug. 30, 1875

Collins, James Marshall

- Folder 02) Letter to his sister "Lizzie" - Apr. 30, 1876  
Letter to his sister "Lizzie" - Nov. 12, 1876

#### JOURNALS

Collins, Charles

- Folder 03) Memoranda and Account Book - 1831-1832  
Folder 04) Manuscripts - 1835-1839  
Folder 05) Scraps - 1835  
Folder 06) Diary - 1842-1864

### BOX 2 - MC 2003.6

#### JOURNALS (cont.)

Collins, Charles (cont.)

- Folder 01) Diary - 1852-1854  
Folder 02) Diary - 1855-1872

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Collins, Charles

- Folder 03) Prophetic statement - Nov. 5, 1835

#### SERMONS

Collins, Charles

- Folder 04) Sermon, untitled - undated  
"A Reply to Mr. Ross at Glad Spring Church" - May 1848  
Folder 05) "Methodism and Calvinism Compared" - Dec. 24, 1848  
Folder 06) Sketches of Sermons - 1850-1856  
Folder 07) Bound volume of printed sermons - 1852  
Folder 08) Bound volume of printed sermons - 1853

### OVERSIZED FOLDERS - OC 2003.6

#### DIPLOMAS

Collins, Charles

- Folder 01) Maine Wesleyan Seminary - July 11, 1832  
Wesleyan University, B.A. - Aug. 23, 1837  
Wesleyan University, M.A. - Aug. 5, 1840

**BOX 1 - OC 2003.6**

**SCRAPBOOKS**

Collins, John Stone Hart and Collins, Narcissa

Folder 01) Scrapbook - 1837-1890

Folder 02) Loose materials from scrapbook

This collection register was prepared by Malinda Triller, July 2003.