

Archives and Special Collections

Dickinson College

Carlisle, Pennsylvania

**COLLECTION REGISTER**

Name: **Sharp, Alexander A. (1862-1942)** **MC 2004.2**

Materials: Papers (1874-1880)

Volume: 0.1 linear feet (1 Document Box)

Donation: Gift of Mr. Charles G. Beetem, 1964

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

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Alexander A. Sharp was born in Newville, Pennsylvania, on January 10, 1862, to John Riddle and Martha Woods Sharp. Sometime during his early childhood, Alexander's family moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He likely attended a local grammar school before advancing to the Dickinson Preparatory School in 1878. Finishing his preparatory studies, Alexander Sharp enrolled at Dickinson College where he graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in 1883. Active in both the Belles Lettres Society and Sigma Chi, Sharp maintained close connections with his old fraternity for the rest of his life.

Completing his studies at Dickinson, Alexander Sharp enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania to study medicine. It was during his time there that Sharp met his first wife, Jennie Beyard, whom he married on March 8, 1885. Receiving his medical degree in 1885, Sharp decided to forgo a life of medicine and moved out west to Larned, Kansas, working as a representative of the Mortgage Trust Company of Pennsylvania.

Taking an active interest in the civic affairs of Larned, Alexander Sharp held many prominent positions during his time in Kansas. These included positions not only among the local government, but also the local Masonic chapter. An active member of the National Guard, Sharp helped with the training of soldiers prior to World War I.

Alexander Sharp stayed in Kansas until 1921, when he moved to Chicago to head the corporation's regional offices. It was during Sharp's time in Chicago that he was awarded two honorary degrees from his undergraduate alma mater: a master's degree in 1926 and a doctor of laws degree in 1942.

During his life Alexander Sharp and wife Jennie Beyard had four children: Mary J. Woods Sharp, Richard Woods Sharp, John Beyard Sharp, and Elrich Cole Sharp. Sometime after the death of his first wife in 1934, Alexander Sharp married Lucille Deaton.

After bouts with prolonged illnesses, Alexander Sharp died on December 6, 1942. Having amassed a considerable fortune during his time in Larned and Chicago, Sharp decided to

donate to the college that gave him his start. On February 5, 1938, the "Alexander A. Sharp Trust" was established which provided \$500 dollars a month to a student through the "Alexander A. Sharp Student Loan Endowment." Also established was a reading room in the Bosler Hall Library in 1941, which was transferred over to the Boyd Lee Spahr Library after its completion. This gesture of philanthropy would continue to influence his descendants as successive Sharp family members saw fit to donate both time and money to Dickinson College.

Not much at all is known about Alexander Sharp's sister, Mary J. W. Sharp (1863-1882). It is assumed that, like Alexander, she attended a local public grammar school.

## COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Alexander Sharp Collection is housed in one document box and is divided into two series: Essays and Compositions and Miscellaneous. This collection was donated to the college by Mr. Charles G. Beetem.

The Essays and Compositions series includes writings from Alexander Sharp's grammar school and college years and from Mary Sharp's grammar school days. The essays, debate notes, and other school writings of Alexander and Mary are arranged chronologically for those materials that are dated, with undated writings following at the end. The essays cover a wide variety of topics and offer a glimpse of typical school work from the latter nineteenth century.

The Miscellaneous series contains materials regarding a William N. Sharp. There are two receipts reflecting William's guardianship for the heirs of Christian Geese, as well as an agreement regarding property that William Wilt was renting from William Sharp.

## COLLECTION INVENTORY

### BOX 1 - MC 2004.2

#### ESSAYS AND COMPOSITIONS

Sharp, Alexander (Grammar School)

- Folder 01) "We Learn by Failing" (draft and revision) - Nov. 6, 1874  
"What we Learn from Nature" - Nov. 20, 1874  
"The Study of History" - Dec. 4, 1874
- Folder 02) "Life in the country . . ." - Jan. 15, 1875  
"Resolved, that the Negro has received more ill treatment from the  
hand of the White-man than the Indians" - Jan. 29, 1875  
"Truth" - Feb. 12, 1875  
"Character of St. John and St. Paul" - March 12, 1875
- Folder 03) "Cumberland County"  
"Is Childhood the Happiest Period of Life?" (draft and revision)  
"The Jewish Tabernacle"  
"Joseph"
- Folder 04) "The Lion"  
"Newville"  
"The Ostrich"  
"Whatsoever thy hand findeth . . ."

**BOX 1 - MC 2004.2 (cont.)**

ESSAYS AND COMPOSITIONS (cont.)

Sharp, Alexander (Dickinson College)

- Folder 05) "Facts, what they are, how they are found, and what they are worth." - Sept. 23, 1879  
"Truth" - Nov. 25, 1879  
"Athens and Sparta" - Dec. 18, 1879  
Folder 06) "Daniel Defoe" (draft and revision)  
"Electricity and some changes which it has wrought"  
"Resolved, that the Mormon delegate to the U.S. Congress should not take his seat" - c1880

Sharp, Mary J. W. (Grammar School)

- Folder 07) "The Study of Geography" - May 21, 1874  
"The third commandment is..." - Nov. 6, 1874  
"Kindness" - Nov. 20, 1874  
"Rain" - Dec. 4, 1874  
Folder 08) "Perseverance" - Jan. 15, 1875  
"Resolved, that Girls have Greater Sources of Enjoyment than Boys" - Feb. 5, 1875  
"Sabbath" - Feb. 26, 1875  
Folder 09) "Newville" - April 1875  
"The History of Moses" - April 15, 1875  
"Honesty is the Best Policy" - May 7, 1875  
"Autumn" - Oct. 8, 1875  
"Cumberland County" - Oct. 22, 1875  
Folder 10) "Is childhood the happiest period of life?"  
"The Jewish Tabernacle"  
"Joseph"  
"Paper"  
"Sheep"

MISCELLANEOUS

Sharp, William N.

- Folder 11) Documents re: guardianship of the heirs of Christian Geese  
Receipt signed by Samuel McKeehan - April 11, 1825  
Receipt signed by Elizabeth Geese - Oct. 10, 1826  
Article of agreement with William Witt - Dec. 30, 1832