

Collection #
SC 1184

CHASE PRESCOTT PARSONS PAPERS, 1858–1887

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Processed by
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 39 items (6 folders)

COLLECTION DATES: 1858-1887

PROVENANCE: Paul E. Belisle, Watertown, MA, November 1958 and February 1959; Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, MO, July 1967

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: None

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 1958.1104, 1959.0205, 1967.0705

NOTE: Letters from Parsons to his family while a student at Dartmouth College (1850-1853) are held by Dartmouth College.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Chase Prescott Parsons (1832-1879), a native of Gilmanton, Belknap County, New Hampshire, attended Dartmouth College from 1850 to 1853. He moved to Evansville, Indiana, about 1858. He had been teaching in a [one-room?] school in Gilmanton, but had been sick and had come west for his health.

After a successful year of teaching in Evansville, Parsons spent a year selling machines, but found he did not have sufficient capital. Returning to Evansville in February 1860, he resumed teaching for the remainder of the school year. In the summer of 1860 he sold schoolbooks on the road, and then spent the school year 1860-1861 teaching in nearby Washington. By 1861 he was courting Hattie Howes of Evansville. Married in 1863, they lived first with her parents and then had a house of their own. Eventually the household included two daughters and a son, and also a German hired girl. By 1866 Parsons was selling insurance, over a territory that extended down the river to Cairo, Illinois. He also had an extensive greenhouse.

About 1874 Parsons went back to teaching, in the new high school in Evansville-- Latin, English, History, Analysis-- though he thought very little of the school board. Hattie's mother died in 1875, and Parsons's mother in 1879. Parsons himself died a few months later, from some sort of lung trouble. The widow and children stayed in Evansville with the help of friends. By 1887 the 17-year-old son, Lewis Parsons, was working as a stenographer for the Evansville and Terre Haute Railroad. He was active in the Temperance Society and in Methodist meetings.

Source: Materials in collection

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection contains 39 items of correspondence dated 1858-1887. It is arranged chronologically. Most of the letters are from Chase P. Parsons in Evansville to his mother and unmarried sister in Gilmanton, N. H. After his death the series is continued by his widow and his son Lewis.

Parsons was an educated man, who wrote a hand good enough so that he could teach penmanship. Writing from a broader background to his relatives confined in the New England hills, he commented not only on his own life but on politics and the passing beauties of nature. His letters and his wife's and son's are unusually forthright and specific, so that the collection gives a good picture of how one emigrant from New England got along when he pursued his health and fortune in the West.

FOLDER LISTING

FOLDER

- 1: 1858-1860
- 2: 1861-1865
- 3: 1866-1868
- 4: 1875-1878
- 5: 1879-1881
- 6: 1883-1887, n.d.

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 1184).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.