

Collection #
SC 1793

**MARY ELLEN GRAYDON SHARPE
PAPERS, 1846–1911**

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Processed by
Charles Latham
22 April 1996
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 5 folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1846-1911

PROVENANCE: Charles Latham, Jr, Indianapolis, IN, 1 September 1981, 15 April and 29 May 1996

RESTRICTIONS: None

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

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: M 0673 Julia Graydon Sharpe (daughter)
SC 2535 Joseph K. Sharpe, Jr. (son)
SC 2222 Jane Chambers McKinney Graydon (mother)
PS 3537 .H4 A8 1913 MEGS, *As the years go by* (1913)
CT 00233 .G7 S5 1909 MEGS, *A family retrospect* (1909)

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 1981.0920, 1996.0403, 1996.0452

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary Ellen Graydon Sharpe (1823-1914) was born in Harrisburg, Pa., the daughter of Alexander and Jane Chambers (McKinney) Graydon. Her father, an iron manufacturer, was an ardent abolitionist, and is said to have operated a major station on the underground railroad. Mary Ellen graduated from Cedar Hill Seminary near Pittsburgh. In 1843 the family moved to Indianapolis, and became members of the Second Presbyterian Church, of which Henry Ward Beecher was the young pastor. In 1847 Mary Ellen Graydon married Joseph K. Sharpe; the marriage was one of the last performed by Beecher before he removed to Brooklyn.

The couple had nine children, of which four survived to adulthood. Sharpe ran a leather goods store and dealt in real estate, and for some years was quite successful. From 1866 till about 1880, the family lived in the large house at what is now Tenth and Pennsylvania Streets which had been built by Calvin Fletcher. Both Sharpes were musical, and were active in two Presbyterian choirs.

J. K. Sharpe's ventures failed about 1880, and the family lived more quietly. Two unmarried daughters, and a daughter separated from her husband, continued to live with the parents. In 1898 they moved into a new house in Morton Place.

In Mrs. Sharpe's old age, her children published two books she had written: *A family retrospect* (1909), and a book of poetry entitled *As the years go by* (1913). In 1911 she wrote an account of her early years in the Second Presbyterian Church.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection, filling five folders, contains correspondence, an artifact, a narrative, and photographs, dated 1846-1911. It is arranged chronologically.

In Folder 1 is an 1846 letter from Henry Ward Beecher to Mary Ellen Graydon, playfully addressed to "Rose" and signed "Sweet Briar" and the veil worn by Mary Ellen Graydon on her wedding day, 1847 (stored with artifacts). In Folder 2 is a letter written to Mrs. Sharpe by her two sisters while she was on her wedding trip in 1847. It describes Mrs. Beecher's illness and "spells." "She was bled and cuped and the galvanic battery was tried." According to the second sister, the spell "was more like a convulsion-- it required several persons to hold her down and lasted a long time...The issue is just what we feared...he must go to the sea shore to save the life of his wife."

Folder 3 contains a fond birthday note from Mrs. Sharpe to her son in 1901; Folder 4 a reminiscence of the Second Presbyterian Church written in 1911; and Folder 5 a small album of photographs taken about 1910.

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 1793).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.