

Collection #  
SC 0111

**WILLIAM WESLEY BORDEN  
PAPERS, 1824-1895**

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Processed by

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 3 manuscript folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1824-1895

PROVENANCE: Children's Museum of Indianapolis, 1955

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Clark County schools collection, 1840-1936; Map of Clark and Floyd counties, Indiana; Map of Jefferson County, Ind. : prepared for the sixth annual report of E.T. Cox, State Geologist; Map of Scott County, Ind. : prepared for the sixth annual report of E.T. Cox, State Geologist; In honor of Prof. Wm. Borden's 150th birthday : Aug. 18, 1973.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1955.0033

NOTES:

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Wesley Borden was born August 18, 1823 to John and Lydia Borden in New Providence of Clark County, Indiana. John was originally from Rhode Island and helped found the town of New Providence (now Borden, Indiana), named such to honor the capital of his home state. John died a little more than a year after William was born, leaving Lydia to raise William and his brother. Lydia Borden was an energetic and well-read woman who continued to run many of the businesses that her husband started before he died, as well as raised William and his brother John to have an interest in books and study. At age nine, Lydia sent William to the Washington County Seminary, where he studied until going to Indiana State University, where William stayed until he finished his education. After finishing his education, William returned home and worked the family farm, providing for his mother until she died in 1851.

In 1862, Borden met Doctor Reid from Salem who showed him fossils that Reid had found and aroused Borden's interest. Borden began studying geology and became a well-respected geological researcher, and in 1873 was appointed as the assistant to Professor Cox, the state geologist at the time. During the time he spent in this position, Borden assisted with making geological surveys of Clark County and several other counties. In 1878, Borden engaged in a silver mine in Colorado, and used his geological knowledge to his advantage and made a large profit before selling any interest and shares in the company.

Returning to New Providence in 1880, William used the profits from the silver mine to found the Borden Institute from his own pocket, believing a liberal education to be one of the most important things to prepare for a successful life. Borden also founded a museum that housed many fossils, minerals, and Native American artifacts on the site of his old home. In 1884 Borden married Emma Dunbar, who supported him and helped him in his endeavors until he died in 1906.

### Sources:

Baird, Lewis C. *Baird's History of Clark County, Indiana*. B. F. Bowen & Company Publishers, 1909.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains correspondence from William Borden and his mother Lydia with various people about family news and the state of the family farm. The collection also contains receipts for the sale of goods, primarily bags of corn, and land. There are also tax receipts for William Borden. The collection also contains the results for Boden's geological survey of Clark and Floyd Counties.

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