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Sears Family Papers (MSS 518)

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In June 1842, Chauncey and Emily (Hollister) Sears joined the Shaker community at New Lebanon, New York, where several members of Emily’s family were already members. The Sears children at the time included: Florinda (1825-1901), Louisa “Emma Louise” (1826-1857), Francis “Frank B.” (1828-1912), Charles May (1829-1900), Adaline (1831-1886), Chauncey Edward (1833-1889), Julia Levisa (1835-1906), Elizabeth Ann (1837-1916). Three of the daughters stayed with the Shakers and never married: Florinda, Adaline, and Elizabeth Ann. The others children eventually married and left the Shakers, including Chauncey Edward who married Shaker eldress Polly Ann Smith on 7 June 1873 in Columbus, Ohio. After leaving the Shakers they moved to Circleville, Ohio, and established a cannery. Chauncey died in New York City on 7 February 1889; Polly Ann lived until 10 December 1921. She practiced medicine in the community. They had no children.

This collection contains information about the family of Chauncey and Emily (Hollister) Sears who joined the Shaker community in New Lebanon, New York. Most of their eight children lived with the Shakers for varying numbers of years. The collection contains collected historical and genealogical information about the Sears family (Folders 5,7,8) and a short treatise on the Shakers (Folder 6). Folder 5 also includes typescripts of two letters written by William Henry Sears, one to his mother and one to Shaker Anna Maria Graves thanking her for hospitality during a 1912 visit. Folder 2 includes a bound Shaker manuscript hymnal commenced by Polly Ann Smith at New Lebanon in 1848. It includes songs dated through 1862. Folder 2 also includes eleven manuscript hymns on individual sheets of paper sent by different individuals to Smith to include in her hymnal. Folder 3 includes a copy book kept by Chauncey Edward Sears in which he copies poetry, essays and religious articles from the popular press. Most of the original material by Sears is generally noted as such. About one-half of the poetry in the back of the leather bound volume is credited to Chauncey. He occasionally will note the year he composed the poem or essay. The copy book starts with a lengthy, undated letter written by James Whittaker to his parents in England. A label inside the copy book’s cover indicates that the volume was bound by Henry De Witt of New Lebanon.
Folder 4 includes a letter from Rufus Bishop (perhaps copied by Chauncey Sears)—believed to have been written to himself—in which he admits his struggles with the ways of the world and his gratitude to the Shakers for their moral guidance and encouragement. This appears to be a contemporary copy, if not an original letter. The penmanship is flawless.

**SHELF LIST**

**BOX 1  Sears Family Papers  1829-1991  35 items**

Folder 1  Inventory and genealogical charts  n.d.  3 items

Folder 2  Shaker manuscript hymnal with loose hymns (11) commenced by Polly Ann Smith in 1848 at New Lebanon, NY  1848-1862  12 items

Folder 3  Copy book containing essays, poems, and occasional writings of Chauncey Edward Sears, a Shaker at New Lebanon, NY, and selected works by popular and historic authors  1850-1870  2 items

Folder 4  Letter written by Rufus Bishop to Rufus (believed to be himself) in which he admits his struggles with the ways of the world and thanks the Shakers for their moral instruction and encouragement  1829  1 item

Folder 5  Short biographical sketches of Charles May Sears and Chauncey E. Sears, as well as two letters written by William H. Sears, one to his mother and one to Shaker Maria Graves at New Lebanon  1912  4 items

Folder 6  Information related to the Shakers and the relationship with the Sears family  n.d.  1 item

Folder 7  Historical/genealogical sketch of the Sears family by Burton Peabody Sears and his obituary and letter from his widow  1938-1975  2 items

Folder 8  Photos taken at Hesper, Kansas of a Friends meeting house and cemetery with connections to the Sears family  1991  10 items
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Shaker manuscript hymnal commenced
by Polly Ann Smith in 1848; copy book of Shaker
Chauncey E. Sears, 1840-1870, which includes
occasional original poems and essays by Sears
as well as short examples of popular and historical
authors; an 1829 letter from Rufus Bishop that extols
the moral virtues of the Shakers; historical and
genealogical information about the Sears family.
1/2 box.  8 folders.  35 items.  Originals,
typescripts and photos.
SC2014. 106.1

SUBJECT ANALYTICS

Bishop, Rufus, d. 1852       B1,F4
De Witt, Henry – Mentioned       B1,F3
Graves, Anna Maria, 1833-1914 – Letter to, 1912       B1,F5
Hesper Friends Academy – Hesper, Kansas – Photos       B1,F8
Hesper Friends Church – Hesper, Kansas – Photos       B1,F8
Hesper, Kansas – Photos       B1,F8
Hinkley, Barnabas, d. 1861 – Comments about       B1,F3
Hollister, Alonzo Giles, 1830-1911       B1,F3
Motherhood – Comments about       B1,F3
Patriotism       B1,F3
Poetry       B1,F3
Sears, Burton Peabody, 1887-1974 – Relating to       B1,F7
Sears, Charles May, 1829-1900 – Relating to       B1,F5
Sears, Chauncey, 1802-1881 – Relating to       B1,F5
Sears, Chauncey Edward, 1833-1889       B1,F3
Sears family
Sears, Louise (Kaes), b. 1899       B1,F7
Sears, Mary Ann (Smith), 1835-1919 – Letter to, 1912       B1,F5
Sears, Polly Ann (Smith), 1826-1921 – Relating to       B1,F2
Sears, William Henry, 1858-1933       B1,F5
Shakers
Shakers – Hymnals, 1848-1862       B1,F2
Shakers – Music, 1848-1862       B1,F2
Whitaker, James, 1751-1787       B1,F3
SEE or SEE ALSO

Smith, Polly Ann, 1826-1921
  See:
    Sears, Polly Ann (Smith), 1826-192

Jeffrey 10/01/2014