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Josiah Wood Papers

1854-1874

1 box (0.5 linear ft.)

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A veteran of the Civil War and one time resident of the Hopedale community, Josiah Wood tried his hand at several lines of work during his life, including tin-peddler, farmer, and carpenter.

The Josiah Wood Papers consist primarily of letters between Wood, living in Hopedale and New Bedford, Massachusetts, and his relatives in Philadelphia and elsewhere in the northeastern and western parts of the country. While some of the correspondence contains references to larger-scale historical events, such as the Civil War or westward expansion, the majority concerns events and routines of everyday family life. The letters illustrate the considerable effort made to keep in touch with and informed about distant family members and friends.

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Civil War

Massachusetts (East)

Background on Josiah Wood

Born in the New York state in 1832, Josiah Wood was a resident of the utopian Christian Socialist community of Hopedale, Massachusetts, in 1854. Shortly before or during the Civil War, he married Lurana P. Mosher, with whom he had four children: Lyneus (1866?), Cameron (1871?), Avis M. (1874), and Cortez (1876?). During his life, Wood was employed in a number of different occupations, at different times listed as a tin-peddler, farmer, and carpenter, and in the 1880 census as a merchant. He was a soldier, as well. During the Civil War, he served in Company D, 27th Massachusetts Infantry, sustaining an arm injury in 1864 that required hospitalization at Annapolis Junction.

Scope of collection

The Josiah Wood Papers (1854-1874) consist primarily of letters between Josiah Wood, living in Hopedale and New Bedford, Massachusetts, and his siblings in Philadelphia, as well as extended family and friends in the Northeastern and Western parts of the country, including Massachusetts, Vermont, Chautauqua County (N.Y.), and Wisconsin. Beginning shortly after the death of Josiah's father, the letters contain only a few references to larger-scale historical events such as the Civil War or westward expansion, the majority concerning the events and routines of everyday family life. These letters document births, sickness, marriages, and deaths, with the correspondents exchanging information about their work, business opportunities, wages, land prices, and other timely topics, such as Spiritualism and temperance. More importantly, though, these letters document the relationships of family members, and they illustrate the considerable effort made to keep in touch with relatives and friends.

Wood's chief correspondents are his sister, Sarepta, and brother, Nathan, both of whom lived in Philadelphia. Other correspondents include Josiah's sister, Lillis, who died after several months of illness apparently related to an accident; his father's brother, Josiah Wood, a wagon maker in New York State; his cousin Ormond A. Mack and uncle T.J. Mack, who moved west in 1856. A number of letters written during the Civil War contain references to soldiers, some recuperating in federal hospitals.

Apart from Josiah's correspondence, the collection includes letters to Lurana Wood from her mother Lizzie, sister Abbie, and brother Loren in 1869, all written during a visit to Philadelphia. Finally, the collection contains religious writings by an unidentified author, accounts and addresses, calling cards, and about 20 envelopes.

Inventory

Conner, C.B. and Keeting, John: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1865
Box 1: 1
From hospitalized soldiers.

Delia: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1864-1865
Box 1: 2

Green, Carrie: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1855-circa 1871
Box 1: 3

Mack, Ormond A. and T.J. (?): Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1854-1856
Box 1: 4
Excerpts from letters

Portage City, June 8, 1856: "You see that I am not in Eagle. I am with Aunt Miranda's in Portage City. I am at work at the carpenters. I like the place first rate. I have left home not likely I shall live there any more. What are you doing in New Bedford. I think very much of going to Kansas in the spring. that is if things are settled so a person can be safe. Come out and go with me I think Father will go too."

Eagle, July 14, 1856, [T.J. Mack?]: "...Ormond not being here we opened it we sent Ormond your address suppose he has written long before this, in your letter you enquire the chance for buying land the price expense & so on. the chance for buying government land is not very good. the government has appropriated large quantities of land to rail road companies for the purpose of building rail roads the Companies to select first Consequently the land offices are closed in Wisconsin...Ormond is getting the Kansas fever perhaps he will go there in spring I expect that is a good country when they get done fighting there Perhaps I shall go to. I am not able to travel much on my lame leg so that I keep pretty close home as soon as I am able to travel I

intend to see the Country."

Mosher, Abbie: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1865
Box 1: 5

Wood, Josiah (Uncle): Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1855-1856
Box 1: 6
Excerpts from letters:

Busti Corners, June 24, 1855: "As to myself going to live at Hopedale, I have no future prospect of it at present, and what I may do in the future I cannot at present determine. There are various communities in operation and in prospect, which I am anxiously watching, and there will probably be some on the same or similar principles of that of Hopedale in a far more favorable situation as to soil, climate, and many other advantages. I would like to have you write immediately on receiving this all you know respecting Hopedale that would be interesting to me, and whether Mr Gay has started the wagon business there, as I feel interested in the prosperity of the community."

Busti Corners, August 17, 1856: "You requested me to inform whether I have had any communications from my Brother [Abiel ?] . I don't know as I have had any since his departure from the Earthly Tabernacle that appear to be very reliable, unless I have my own medium, and that perhaps would be somewhat doubtful with you, and I do not feel confidence to say much about it. I have been anxious to see some of the most gifted mediums in hopes of getting communications from him, but have not been in the way of seeing such of late. But there is a printed notice of a meeting to be held the last three days of the present month at Kerrs corners, and there will probably be a large meeting of Spiritualists, and perhaps some good mediums, and I intend to be there and perhaps I may obtain some communications, and I also think some of going to Buffalo before I return, as I understand there are some extraordinary [sic] mediums reside there. Spiritualism is increasing wonderfully in the Western country and many astonishing things taking place according to accounts that I have rec'd."

Wood, Lillis: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
circa 1854-1855
Box 1: 7

Wood, Linda: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah and Wood, Lurana P.
1874
Box 1: 8

Wood, Nathan H.: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1854-1865
Box 1: 9

Wood, Sarepta: Incoming letters to Wood, Josiah
1854-1865
Box 1: 10
Excerpts from letters

Philadelphia, Aug 28, 1864: "Yours of the 23rd is received. I am glad to hear that your health is improving. I did hope to get down to see you, but it is impossible at present to do so. Worthy is so, that I cannot leave him. He is obliged to give up business. I am trying to get him into the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane...Ormond sympathises with you in your affliction, and congratulates you on your release from rebeldom. I received your letter from Richmond last week. Also one you wrote after your arrival at Annapolis."

Philadelphia, Jan 22, [1865]: "Do you know anything of a man by the name of Edward L.[?] Rockwell of the 11th Penn Cavalry an exchange prisoner who died at Annapolis some time last fall. If you do, or can find out anything about him please write me. He was a beau of a poor girl and she is very much distressed about-"

Philadelphia, March 28, [1865]: "I was very glad to receive yours of the 19th...One thing I wish to do and that is to beg you while you are in the hospital and have the time which must hang heavily to improve it in studying spelling and arithmetic. I could have procured you an exelent[sic] position in the quartermasters department as clerk if only you had been fitted to it - Now I do not want you to be offended at my speaking to you thus plainly. It will be a great assistance to you through life even should you follow out your idea of farming."

Wood, Josiah: Outgoing letters to Henry
ca. 1864
Box 1: 11

Wood, Josiah: Outgoing letters to Mosher, Lizzie
1865
Box 1: 12

Wood, Josiah: Outgoing letters to Wood, Lurana P.
1869
Box 1: 13

Green, Carrie: Letter to Wood, Lurana P.
1869
Box 1: 14

Mosher, Abbie: Letter to Wood, Lurana P.
1869
Box 1: 15

Mosher, Lizzie: Letter to Wood, Lurana P.
circa 1869
Box 1: 16

Mosher, Loren N.: Letters to Wood, Lurana P.
1869
Box 1: 17

Accounts, addresses
1868, undated
Box 1: 18

Calling cards
circa 1854
Box 1: 19

Envelopes
1854-1865
Box 1: 20

Religious writings
undated
Box 1: 21

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Purchased from Carmen Valentino in 1992.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Astrid Recker, November 2007.

Language:

English

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Please use the following format when citing materials from this collection:

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Subjects

Spiritualism--United States--History--19th century

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

West (U.S.)--History--19th century

Wood, Josiah

Wood, Lurana P.

Contributors

Wood, Josiah [main entry]

Genres and formats

Letters (Correspondence)

Link to similar SCUA collections

Civil War

Massachusetts (East)



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