

**Elizabeth Hayward Collection
of Ursuline Academy Materials**

1830-1985

MS.2011.027

<http://hdl.handle.net/2345/2831>

Archives and Manuscripts Department

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Summary Information

Library Unit	Archives and Manuscripts Department
Creator	Hayward, Elizabeth W.
Title	Elizabeth Hayward collection of Ursuline Academy materials
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1878
Date [inclusive]	circa 1830-1985
Extent	1.0 Linear feet (2 boxes)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>This collection was compiled by Elizabeth W. Hayward, a former Ursuline Academy student. It contains correspondence, notes, clippings, and printed material relating to the Ursuline Academy convent fire in 1834 and a reunion of Ursuline Academy graduates in 1878. The correspondence series is the largest and includes unpublished firsthand accounts of the convent fire and riots. Materials date from 1830 to 1985, the bulk from 1878.</p>

Preferred Citation note

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, Elizabeth Hayward collection of Ursuline Academy materials, MS.2011.027, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Processed by Alexandra Bisio, August 2012. This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit.

Restrictions on access

Collection is open for research.

Restrictions on use

Though the copyright interests have not been transferred to Boston College, all of the items in the collection are in the public domain.

Provenance

This collection was purchased from Roger Warner in May 2011.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Anti-Catholic documents collection, 1844-1930, MS.2007.03, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Shaw, Lemuel. Ursuline Convent trial notes, 1834, Massachusetts Historical Society.

The Ursuline Convent, Charlestown, MA papers. Catholic University Archives.

Biographical/Historical note

Opened in 1820, the Ursuline Convent Academy was the first Roman Catholic school for girls in Massachusetts. The convent was established by Reverend John Lefebre de Cheverus and two Irish Ursuline Sisters, Mary Joseph and Magdalene (Mary and Catherine Ryan) in 1817. Two years later, the Academy school was opened on land adjoining the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston. Under the leadership of Superior Mother Mary Edmond St. George and Bishop Benedict Fenwick, the school soon outgrew its quarters and relocated to Mount Benedict in Charlestown in 1828.

By the 1830s the school housed fifty to sixty boarders, many of whom belonged to the city's prominent Unitarian families. In 1834, only ten of the fifty-seven pupils being educated at the convent were Catholic. The sisters of Mount Benedict taught young ladies ages six to fourteen, and divided the school into two classes: the junior, supervised by Sister Mary Augustine (Frances O'Keefe); and the senior, supervised by Sister Mary Benedict (Mary Barber). The school boasted a more diverse and rigorous curriculum than was typically offered to American girls of the period. The Ursuline's European-style education exposed pupils to academic subjects, such as geography, astronomy, and philosophy in addition to religious instruction, needlework, and "the extra branches," which included cooking, music, and painting.

On August 11, 1834, a mob of townspeople gathered at the gates of the convent, demanding to see a nun who was rumored to be kept in the convent against her will. Spurred on by a revival of anti-Catholic nativism, the townspeople ransacked and burned the convent, forcing the students and sisters to flee to nearby farms. Though attempts were made to revive their ministry after the fire, the Bostonian Ursulines were officially disbanded in 1840.

In February 1878, Mrs. Elizabeth Williams Hayward (circa 1819-1899), wife of George P. Hayward, decided to commemorate the thirty-fourth anniversary of Mount Benedict's destruction by reuniting the former convent girls who were present on the night of the riot. She held a reunion at her home on Pinckney Street in Boston on February 27, 1878. Amongst the attendees was Louisa Goddard Whitney (1819-1883), who had one year earlier written an account of her experience entitled *The Burning of the Convent: A Narrative of the Destruction by a Mob of the Ursuline School on Mount Benedict, Charlestown, as Remembered by One of the Pupils*. Though some declined Hayward's invitation, most were interested, and provided their former classmate with leads to the married names and locations of other former students. Ann Babson (b. 1822), the wife of state senator John J. Babson of Gloucester, Massachusetts, could not attend the reunion, but she did provide the names of other convent girls and a sketch of her own remembrances of the convent fire.

Sources

Schultz, Nancy Lusignan. *Fire and Roses the Burning of the Charlestown Convent*, 1834. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000.

“John James Babson.” *Memorial Biographies of the New England Historical Genealogical Society: 1880-1889*, 258. The New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1907.

Scope and Contents note

Elizabeth W. Hayward's collection of Ursuline Academy and reunion materials consists of correspondence, clippings, printed matter, and an artifact. Correspondence includes letters to Hayward and her husband, George P. Hayward, regarding the 1878 reunion, former Ursuline students present during the 1834 riot, and memorabilia from and commemorating life at the Mount Benedict convent. Reunion letters mostly consist of responses to Hayward's invitation. Many of her classmates, however, include information regarding the possible locations and married names of other former convent girls. Two of Hayward's correspondents, Ann Babson and Lucy H. Bates, provide accounts of the convent fire from their own recollections. Abby F. Gay includes lyrics to a song recalled from her school days at the convent. Included with correspondence are several lists of the names of reunion attendees, generally identified by maiden name, recording known married names and residences. Some of the materials in this collection were annotated by an unknown individual circa 1985; this same individual made notes on former convent girls Malvinia and Rosalinda Storer, which are also included in this collection.

Clippings in this collection include a society announcement for the reunion at the Hayward home and a retrospective regarding the convent fire and riots. Printed matter includes a prospectus of the Ursuline Academy from the early 1830s and a rare copy of Benjamin Franklin DeCosta's 1876 pamphlet on the life of his aunt Mary Rebecca Theresa DeCosta, one of the first American postulantes of the Boston Ursuline Convent, entitled *In memoriam: Sister Sainte Claire of the Order of St. Ursula*. Clippings and printed matter are arranged chronologically.

All materials in this collection were originally housed by Hayward in a small vellum-covered trunk, which has been preserved and included in the artifacts series.

Arrangement note

This collection is arranged in three series: I. Artifacts; II. Correspondence and lists; III. Clippings and printed matter. Series I contains the vellum-covered trunk in which the materials were originally housed. Series II is arranged alphabetically and then chronologically, and Series III is arranged chronologically.

Collection Inventory

Series I: Artifacts, circa 1830s-1890s

Vellum-covered trunk, circa 1830s-1890s

Box 2

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/216\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/216)

Series II: Correspondence and lists, 1878-1985 (Bulk, 1878)

Babson, Ann, 1878 March 25

Box 1

Folder 1

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/190\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/190)

Babson, Ann, 1878 April 9

Box 1

Folder 2

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/191\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/191)

Babson, Ann, with clippings enclosed, 1888 November
24

Box 1

Folder 3

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/192\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/192)

Bates, Lucy H., 1878 February

Box 1

Folder 4

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/193\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/193)

Brewer, Elizabeth H., 1878 March 10

Box 1

Folder 5

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/194\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/194)

Bridgeman, Susan Shaw, 1878 March 8

Box 1

Folder 6

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/195\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/195)

Cotting, Benjamin E., 1878 February 23

Box 1

Folder 7

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/196\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/196)

DeBlois, Millicent C., 1878 February

Box 1

Folder 8

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/197\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/197)

DeBlois, Millicent C., 1878 March 18

Box 1

Folder 9

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/198\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/198)

DeCosta, Benjamin Franklin, 1878 April 11

Box 1

Folder 10

[\[http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/199\]](http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/199)

Fay, Maria D., 1878 February [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/200]	Box 1	Folder 11
Gay, Abby F., 1878 March [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/201]	Box 1	Folder 12
Greenough, Anna Parkman, 1878 February 20 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/202]	Box 1	Folder 13
Holmes, Maria W., 1878 February 15 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/203]	Box 1	Folder 14
King, Louisa Murdock, 1878 February 27 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/204]	Box 1	Folder 15
Richardson, Elizabeth Page, 1878 February 25 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/205]	Box 1	Folder 16
Robinson, Hannah to Maria D. Fay, 1878 February [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/206]	Box 1	Folder 17
Schuster, Anne M., 1878 February [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/207]	Box 1	Folder 18
Storer sisters note, 1985 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/208]	Box 1	Folder 19
Third meeting of the Ursuline graduates note and invitation draft, circa 1878-1899 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/209]	Box 1	Folder 20
Ursuline Academy graduates lists, 1878 February [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/210]	Box 1	Folder 21
Wells, Elizabeth S., 1878 February [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/211]	Box 1	Folder 22

Series III: Clippings and printed matter, circa 1830-1886

<p>"Ursuline Community, Mount Benedict - Charlestown," prospectus, circa 1830 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/212]</p>	Box 1	Folder 23
<p>DeCosta, Benjamin Franklin. <i>In Memoriam - Sister Sainte Claire of the Order of St. Ursula</i>, pamphlet, genealogy, and clipping, 1876 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/213]</p>	Box 1	Folder 24
<p>"Out and About," <i>Gazette Sunday Morning Edition</i>, photocopies, 1878 March 3 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/214]</p>	Box 1	Folder 25
<p>"Burned by a Mob: Scenes at Charlestown Fifty-two Years Ago," <i>Sunday Globe</i>, 1886 December 26 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/215]</p>	Box 1	Folder 26