"The White Quakers Dublin, 1842-1858," undated
MC.975.07.136
Finding aid prepared by Kara Flynn

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April 28, 2016
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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Summary Information

Repository
Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections

Creator
Bennis, Ernest H. (Ernest Henry), 1869-

Title
"The White Quakers Dublin, 1842-1858"

Date
Undated

Extent
0.008 Linear feet

Language
English

Preferred Citation
"The White Quakers Dublin, 1842-1848" (MC.975.07.136), Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.
Biographical note

Ernest H. Bennis (1869-1956), a birthright member of Limerick Monthly Meeting, was an amateur Irish Quaker historian. The eldest child of Joseph Fisher Bennis, a grocer, and Emilia Frances Carrol, he married Helen Margaret Pike, a member of Limerick Monthly Meeting, in 1901. The couple had at least one child, Emilie Bennis (b. 1908). Bennis died in Limerick, Ireland in 1956.

Jacob, Joshua (c.1802–1877), founder of the White Quakers, was born at Clonmel, co. Tipperary, and was educated at Joseph Tatham's school in Leeds and later in Ballitore, co. Kildare. Having been apprenticed to Adam Calvert, Jacob established himself in 1830 as a grocer in Dublin, and his shop, the Golden Teapot, became famous for its fine tea. In 1829 he married Sarah Fayle and they had three sons. A birthright member of the Society of Friends, he criticized the comforts of Quaker life, and in 1838 he was disowned by that body. Assisted by Abigail Beale of Irishtown, near Mountmellick, Queen's county, he formed a society of his own, which gained adherents in Dublin, Clonmel, Waterford, and Mountmellick. In 1842 he and his followers began to practise a communal holding of goods. They also appeared in loose, unbleached woollen garments, a costume previously adopted, in 1762, by John Woolman. The new society, commonly called ‘White Quakers’, held the first of what became yearly meetings in Dublin on 1 May 1843. During these years Jacob issued many (undated) pamphlets and Some Account of the Progress of the Truth as it is in Jesus, a publication which appeared at intervals in 1843.

When a bequest of £9000 was used by Jacob for the benefit of his community, he was taken to court and it was held in 1844 that he had misappropriated money to which others were entitled. On his rejection of the judgment he was imprisoned for two years, and the community's property was seized and put up for auction. From prison he issued anathemas against the Irish lord chancellor E. B. Sugden and Edward Litton, master of the Irish court of chancery. After Jacob's release on grounds of ill health in 1846, the White Quakers were active in food distribution during the great famine, but in 1848 the movement disintegrated. The next year Jacob established a community at Newlands, Clondalkin, co. Dublin, formerly the residence of Arthur Wolfe, Viscount Kilwarden. Its members lived in common, abstaining from meat, and using bruised corn instead of flour. On this community's dissolution, Jacob went into business again at Celbridge, co. Kildare. Since 1842 he had lived apart from his wife, who could no longer share his religious views. On her death he married and adopted the religion of a poor Roman Catholic, Catherine Devine, raising six children in that faith. He died in Wales on 15 February 1877, and was buried at Glasnevin cemetery, Dublin, in a plot purchased many years previously for the White Quakers.

Source: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
This collection is comprised of the single volume exercise book, in which is a copy of an essay entitled "The White Quakers of Dublin, 1842-1848" by Ernest H. Bennis. The essay focuses on Joshua Jacob, an Irish Quaker who began his own branch of Quakerism, called the "White Quakers."

Administrative Information

Publication Information
Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections March 2016

Use Restrictions
Standard Federal Copyright Law Applies (U.S. Title 17).

Acquisition
Unknown.

Processing Information
Processed by Kara Flynn; completed March 2016.

Related Materials

Related materials
MC 1189 Howard Haines Brinton and Anna Shipley Cox Brinton papers

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)
• Jacob, Joshua, 1802-1877

Subject(s)

• Manuscripts
• Quakers
• Quakers--History
• Quakers--Ireland
Collection Inventory

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