Papers relating to Woodbourne Orchard
HC.Coll.1230B
Finding aid prepared by Diana Franzusoff Peterson

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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### Summary Information

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<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Haverford College Quaker &amp; Special Collections</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Haines, Mary R. (Mary Rhoads), 1819-1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Sumner, Arthur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Towne, Laura M. (Laura Matilda), 1825-1901</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Papers relating to Woodbourne Orchard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>1862-1928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
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<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Letters relating to the Penn School on St. Helena, S.C. from the Civil War through 1928 sent to Francis R. Cope and Francis R. Cope Jr. of Woodbourne Orchard. Both originals and copies, the original letters are from Laura Towne and Ellen Murray who taught and monetarily supported the school, also Mary R. Haines, as well as extracts from letters of Arthur Sumner who was principal of a school for African Americans in Charleston, S.C.</td>
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#### Preferred Citation note

Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA, Special Collections, Papers relating to Woodbourne Orchard, Coll. no. 1230 B
Biographical/Historical note

Laura Towne (1825-1901) was educated as both a homeopathic physician and a teacher; also a dedicated abolitionist, she arrived on the Sea Islands, off the coast of South Carolina, in April 1862 as one of the first Northern women to go south to work during the Civil War. She participated in the Port Royal Experiment, the first large-scale government effort to help former slaves and attended to the medical needs of the freedmen on Saint Helena Island and opened the first school for freed slaves in June 1862. She spent the next forty years running the Penn School, which became the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School upon her death in 1901. (Wikipedia, via WWW)

Arthur Sumner was principal of an African American school in Charleston, S.C. around the time of the Civil War.

Francis R. Cope (1821-1909), son of Henry and Rachel Reeve Cope attended Haverford College from 1835-38. He married Anna Stewardson Brown Cope in 1847. A merchant, he was a member of the Board of Managers of Friends Asylum (now Friends Hospital) in Philadelphia from 1865 to 1904.

Francis R. Cope, Jr. (1878-1962) was the son of Quakers Alexis T. Cope and Anna Stewardson Brown Cope. He graduated from Haverford College in 1900 where he was president of his class. He took his M.A. from Harvard University. In 1912, he began his career as a farmer at Woodbourne in Dimock, PA. where he developed a dairy and orchard business, studying fruit trees. He was a naturalist and ornithologist and traveled widely to give lectures. In 1903, he married Evelyn Flower Morris, a Bryn Mawr graduate; in 1956, he married Margaret Wysong.

Scope and Contents note

Of particular interest are the letters of Laura Towne and Ellen Murray, two women who operated a school for African American children, the Penn School, on St. Helena, S.C. sent to Francis R. Cope.

The earliest letter from Towne is written from Oakshade, probably January 1897 reports she would soon return south, and had attended a meeting of the Benezet Society. In February 1897, she wrote again from Frogmore, S.C. reporting that Penn School on St. Helena, S.C. was flourishing, though they had little income. Her third letter in August 1889 was written from Ashbourne in PA, stating that the school had grown, especially the Industrial department, to which end Ellen Murray had contributed $150 as had the Benezet Fund for a new schoolroom and other funds. Cope was entrusted with handling the school's funds. She concludes with political statements about Republicans and Democrats and the southern vote, including the Bourbons.

In August 1889, Murray relays information on the use of buildings at the Penn School and where funds for additional teaching space would come from. She refers to the self-control of oppressed Blacks, even
while deprived of political rights and living in peace with former oppressors, but that Black women could not be admitted into the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, which would be dreadful.

In addition, there are extracts from letters by Arthur Sumner to Joseph Clark, Lieut. 1st Mass. Heavy Artillery Co in Washington D.C. during the Civil War possibly, made by Francis R. Cope Jr. They describe some of his work with Black students at his school whom he generally considers intelligent and handsome and give some interesting details of life at the school and on St. Helena Island, S.C. at the time.

Finally, there are copies of letters from Penn School students and others connected with the school sent to Francis R. Cope Jr. in 1928.
• Penn School (Saint Helena Island, S.C.).