Willits Trust Records, 1883-1915
HC.Coll.1243
Finding aid prepared by Christopher Michael

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit
June 11, 2013
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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Summary Information

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Haverford College Quaker &amp; Special Collections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Willits Trust Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>1883-1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>2.5 Boxes ca. 1000 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>The Willits Trust was a Quaker organization dating from the late 19th and early 20th century based in Philadelphia, PA dedicated to providing religious tracts such as the journal <em>The Africans' Friend</em> to Blacks in the Southern United States and in Liberia. These records consist of correspondence, minutes, financial records, missionary materials, the will of Charles L. Willits, and miscellaneous items.</td>
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**Preferred Citation note**

Haverford College Library, Haverford, PA, Special Collections, Quaker Collection, Willits Trust Records, Coll. No. 1243
Biographical/Historical note

Charles Leeds Willits (August 16, 1814 - November 4, 1883) was a Quaker farmer from New Jersey. He left $10,000 in his will to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and created the Willits Trust for the purpose of distributing religious tracts and writings to "the Colored people of the Southern States of the U.S. and the remainder in the colony of Liberia so that religion and morality may be promoted." The Willits Trust produced and circulated a journal titled *The African's Friend* for several decades, starting in 1885. The early trustees were John Bishop, Joseph S. Elkinton, William Evans, Edward Sharpless, Ephraim Smith, Charles Rhoads, and Jonathan E. Rhoads. William C. Cowperthwaite, William B. Harvey, David Heston, and Heulings Lippincott were also involved with the operation of the Trust. The trust distributed *The African's Friend* through churches and schools in the southern U.S. and partnered with Protestant Missionaries in Africa in order to distribute the tract in Liberia.

Scope and Contents note

The Willits Trust records consist of correspondence, minutes, financial records, missionary materials, the will of Charles L. Willits, and miscellaneous items. Most of the correspondence relates to the distribution and reception of *The African's Friend* journal and the settlement of the Charles L. Willits will. The miscellaneous items include a photograph, a rubber stamp for *The African's Friend*, the key to the Willits Trust box which originally housed these materials, and a 1908 list of the Willits Trust box contents.

Box 1:
Correspondence (ca. 650 items): Letters alphabetized by last name, ca. 1885-1912. Highlights include: Letters from Joseph Crane Hartzell (American Missionary Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church), William H. Heard (U.S. Ambassador to Liberia and clergyman of African Methodist Episcopal Church), and A.E. Johnson (19th century African-American woman writer).

Box 2:
Financial Records (ca. 250 items) including:
Checkbook of Willits Trust treasurer
Cancelled checks, ca. 1885-1894.
Bills and receipts, ca. 1885-1913.
Will of Charles L. Willits and related correspondence (ca. 35 items) including:
1912 certified copy of Charles L. Willits will, 1883.
Related correspondence, ca. 1885-1912. Highlights include: Letters from Samuel A. Willits (nephew of Charles L. Willits and owner of a lumber, coal, and hardware company in NJ) and Huelings Lippincott (a Quaker and President of the National State Bank of Camden, NJ).

Minutes of the Willits Trust (ca. 35 items), including: 1 notebook, loose papers. ca. 1885-1896.

Box 3:

Foreign missionary materials (4 items), including: July 1906 Appleton's magazine featuring an article about missionaries in Liberia, 86th annual report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the year 1904, Reports Foreign Section - The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church (1904), and a 1909 newspaper clipping. ca. 1900-1910.

Items relating to Willits Trust Box (3 items), including: rubber stamp for The African's Friend, key to the Willits Trust tin box which originally housed these materials, and a 1908 list of the Willits Trust box contents.

1 photograph mounted on cardboard backing titled "Moore St. Industrial Institution, Richmond, VA, 1886", 1886.

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**Administrative Information**

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**Publication Information**

Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections June 6, 2013

**Conditions Governing Access note**

This collection is open for research use.

**Conditions Governing Use note**

Copyright restrictions may apply. Please contact the Archives with requests for copying and for authorization to publish, quote, or reproduce the material.

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**Related Materials**

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Related Archival Materials note

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**Controlled Access Headings**

**Geographic Name(s)**

- Liberia Church history

**Personal Name(s)**

- Willits, Charles L (Charles Leeds), 1814-1883
- Willits, Samuel A. (Samuel Abbot), 1843-1919

**Subject(s)**

- Quaker missionaries

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**Bibliography**

1850-1880 U.S. Census via Ancestry.com

Dictionary of Quaker Biography. Typescript. Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford PA.


*The African's Friend: For the Promotion of Religion and Morality*. Philadelphia, Pa: [s.n.].

Willits family. *Willits Family Material*. Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford PA.

Smith, Ephraim. Ephraim Smith Material. Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford PA.

Harvey, William B. Selected Writings of William B. Harvey. Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford PA.

Haddonfield Monthly Meeting Minutes 1863-1897 and Haddonfield Membership 1864-1885 http://trilogy.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/mm/haddomm.xml


http://www.pym.org/grants/granting-groups/willits-granting-group/
## Collection Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correspondence</th>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>Box 2</th>
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**Scope and Contents note**

c.a. 700 items

Correspondence of Willits Trust relating to *The African's Friend* and the will of Charles L. Willits. ca. 1885-1912.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Photograph</th>
<th>Box 3</th>
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**Scope and Contents note**

1 item

Photograph mounted on cardboard backing titled "Moore St. Industrial Institution, Richmond, VA, 1886", 1886.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Miscellaneous</th>
<th>Box 3</th>
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**Scope and Contents note**

3 items

Miscellaneous materials of the Willits Trust include a rubber stamp for *The African's Friend*, the key to the Willits Trust box which originally housed these materials, and a 1908 list of the Willits Trust box contents. ca. 1885-1915.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Records</th>
<th>Box 2</th>
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**Scope and Contents note**
## Missionary Materials

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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### Scope and Contents note

4 items

Missionary materials of the Willits Trust include a newspaper clipping, an article in Appleton's magazine about missionaries in Liberia, and missionary reports of the Episcopal Church. ca. 1900-1910.

## Will

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<th>Box</th>
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### Scope and Contents note

1 item

The Will of Charles L. Willits. 1883

## Minutes

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<tr>
<th>Box</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Scope and Contents note

ca. 35 items

Minutes of the Willits Trust, in notebook and loose papers. ca. 1885-1896.