

Haverford College Library
Special Collections

Finding Aid for the REBECCA SINGER COLLINS PAPERS,
1824-1886

Collection No. 1196
Accession - April 1983
One document box (0.5 linear ft.)
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INFORMATION FOR USERS

Abbreviation of YM for Yearly Meeting, MM for Monthly Meeting.

All dates are standardized rather than transcribed, viz: yr mo/day.

Though not all letters are listed individually, those that are highlighted are done so on the basis of content of the letter. In some folders a smaller set of letters are listed individually.

RESTRICTIONS

No restrictions.

RELATED MATERIALS

Collins family tree on pages 112-113 of *The Collins Family* by Margaret Hill Collins and Ellinor Collins Aird, call number BX 7721 C 712 C71 v.2.

Family tree of Isaac Collins, Sr., MS 990B.
Isaac Sr.'s marriage certificate, in 990 BR.

Portraits of Rebecca and of Isaac, Jr. are in 988B.

A letter from Rebecca is in 851; more of Isaac, Jr.'s letters are in 910a.

The American Friend of 1900 3/22 featured Rebecca's picture on its front page and a short article on page 269. See also, *Sketches of the Lives of Sybil Jones and Rebecca Collins*, BX7755 J68 Z6.

Parent's Gift; or, reading book for little children, BX7747 C718P2
Treasured Gems, BX7725 C7T7

Society of Friends – Wilburite controversy

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The collection contains many letters between Rebecca and Isaac Collins during his extended business trip to London in 1845. Rebecca passes along news from friends and family, and from the Philadelphia Quakers. Isaac writes about the English Quakers, news from friends, and describes the gifts he is sending to Rebecca and the children. There are also many letters to Rebecca from Mary Anna Longstreth, during Rebecca's visit to English and Irish Meetings in 1842-1843. There are also letters of John Pease to Rebecca and Isaac Collins. Rebecca's diaries in the form of booklets and individual pages are dated 1824-1847. Entries are not in order; some are on stray pages rather than in books, and some of the entries in books have been copied from stray "scraps." Most entries concern Rebecca's religious feelings and her often-repeated desire to dedicate herself more and more fully to her faith. Some later entries describe her charitable visits to prisoners, the poor, the sick, and the patients of an insane asylum. One diary is dedicated to the illness and death of Rebecca's brother Henry, including accounts of the remedies offered by doctors, and of Henry's mental and spiritual condition.

A small collection of Quaker documents related to the family includes an original printed birth certificate for Rebecca's youngest daughter Mary Forster Collins, and also an original marriage certificate for James Walton and Achsah Croasdale, grandparents of Mary Forster Collins' husband James Morris Walton. Among the printed material is some paper currency. "United Colonies" bills from 1776 may have been saved because Isaac Collins, Sr. worked as a printer at that time, although these bills are not printed by his establishment in Burlington. There is also a United States bill for ten cents, dated 1874. Finally, there are genealogical notes on the Collins, Singer, and Walton families. These seem to be written at different times by different people. Most are handwritten notes, but there is also a printed page containing a biography of James Morris Walton.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Correspondence

Letters from Rebecca to Isaac Collins, 1840-1847, 1 folder (ca. 35 letters)

Note: most concern news of family and friends, descriptions of Meetings for worship or business, reports of trying to find a buyer for their house, and accounts of Rebecca's visits to the sick, to prisoners, and to an asylum for the insane.

Highlights:

1844 10/28 – [Rebecca mentions Isaac's proposed trip to England]

1845 4/6 – [Contains small note from daughter Anna, age 10]

1845 6/21 – [Reports of dissent and "separatists" in Rhode Island YM]

1845 7/21 – [Separatists identified as Wilburites]

1845 8/10 – [Postscript discouraging Isaac from bringing Margaret home, because she might be a disruptive influence on the younger children]

1845 8/28 – [Includes small postscript from Mary Anna (Longstreth?)]

1847 9/7 – [Describes further conflict in meetings – with Wilburites?]

Letters from Isaac to Rebecca Collins, 1841-1849, 1 folder (ca. 30 letters)

Note: most concern news of friends and family, and Isaac's attempts to sell the "Chinese Collection" in London.

Highlights:

1845 5/22 – [Isaac attends annual meetings of Anti-Slavery Society, Temperance Society, and Peace Society in London]

1845 6/6 – [Brief mention of separation among Philadelphia Quakers]

1845 7/19 – [Mentions letters received from Rebecca & from children]

1845 8/20 – [Mentions letters received from Rebecca, and gifts Isaac is sending the family via his son Isaac III. Anna's doll is fully described in earlier letters.]

1845 9/9 – [English reactions to the Wilburite separation]

1849 9/27 to 10/31 – [Eleven letters mention illness of William (Isaac's son?)]

Letters from Rebecca to others, 1842-1852 and undated, 1 folder (4 letters)

- Undated letter signed "thy loving mother"
- Letter to friend Jane Johnson, 1852 9/11
- Two letters to niece Mary Anna Longstreth, 1842 5/15 and 5/16

Letters from others to Rebecca and/or Isaac, 1842-1867 and undated, 1 folder (ca. 45 letters)

Note: Most letters concern news of friends and family or have religious content. Letter writers include Ann R. Alexander, E.C.C. (Eliza Cope Collins?), Stephen Grellet Collins, S. Corder (Susannah?), Thomas Evans, Josiah Forster, E.P. Gurney, Isaac and J. Hadwen, John Pease, and Sarah Wheeler. There are also several letters from Mary Anna Longstreth, niece of Rebecca and Isaac, and namesake of the Bryn Mawr College scholarship. On a few letters, signatures are not legible or are limited to initials.

Highlights:

- Mary Anna Longstreth's letter of 11/21/1842 refers to receiving pages of Rebecca's diary. This could explain why so many diary pages are detached.
- M. A. Longstreth's letter of 4/16/1843 refers to Rebecca's new baby – Mary Forster? This could explain why she is often referred to as "our English girl" or "English pet" – born on a visit to England!
- M.A. Longstreth's letter of 5/28/1843 refers to a plan to merge Virginia YM with Baltimore YM.
- Alicia Niall's [?] letter of 8/18/1845 is carried by a deputation of English Friends sent in response to the Wilburite separation in the U.S.
- John Pease's letter of 4/3/1847 refers to a famine in Ireland.
- L.P.'s letter of 12/1/1859 is a touching expression of gratitude for

words that changed the writer's life.

Letters from Isaac to others, 1831-1840, 1 folder (5 letters)

Note: Four letters are addressed to Samuel Parsons:

- 1831 3/31 – [a plan to distribute Bibles to poor Quaker families]
- 1832 6/29 – [Isaac's grief at the death of his first wife Margaret]
- 1832 11/13 – [on both the loss of Margaret and the Bible distribution plan]
- 1840 8/31 – [the death of Isaac's son Henry]
- 1840 2/6 - addressed only to "My dear Friend."

Miscellaneous letters, 1825-1886 and undated, 1 folder (4 letters)

- 1825 6/26 letter to Hannah Collins from her sister A.S.C. (Anna Say Collins?)
- 1845 11/23 letter to Edward H. Walton from Edward Hicks
- 1867 6/28 letter to "My dear Friend" from Rebecca White
- 1886 note from John S. Wood, and attached business card
- fragment of letter or diary, no name or year, describing travels in the Midwest and mentioning Rebecca Collins

Diaries and memoranda

Rebecca Collins diaries, 1824-1847, two folders (ca. 14 booklets, some only partial)

Note: Rebecca's diary entries skip around. Books cannot be arranged in strict chronological order.

Most entries concern religious thoughts, reactions to meetings, and Rebecca's hopes and resolutions to dedicate herself more and more fully to her faith.

Highlights:

- Booklet beginning 1825 2/18 – [In entries of 1826 1/11 and 5/18, Rebecca mentions her application to become a Quaker. She has apparently been attending meetings for at least two years before this.]
- Booklet beginning 1826 6/20 – [Second entry is written before the meeting in which Rebecca hopes to be admitted to the Society of Friends.]
- Booklet beginning 1826 7/24 – [Entry dated 1826 8/29 mentions Rebecca's reading of an account by Lindley Murray.]
- Booklet beginning 1826 9/2 – [First entry verifies Rebecca's birthdate; she is turning 22 that month.]
- Booklet beginning 1839 4/14, bound in red – [The following items are laid in: letter from Rebecca Grellet; also, ca. 5 small scraps containing verses, prayers, or devotional thoughts. Writing begins from both front and back of book, with blank pages in between. Inside the cover is a notation that entries in that book have been copied from scraps "by a young Friend."]

Pages 51-53 contain an address that Rebecca delivered to prisoners.

Entry dated 1839 4/14 refers to Rebecca's serving as a representative at a YM.]

- Booklet beginning 1832 4/23 with “Good Samaritan” cover – [Entry of 8/4 has a passing mention of Rebecca’s visit to “West-Town School.” Entry of 1833 10/13 notes that it is Rebecca’s 29th birthday.]
- Booklet beginning 1832 4/27 with “Among the haycocks...” cover – [Entry of 1832 10/13 notes Rebecca’s 28th birthday.]
- Booklet labeled “Private Thoughts of Rebecca Collins, 3rd month 3rd, 1836” – [Entry of 1836 11/13 concerns Rebecca’s thoughts on the upcoming birth of her child. Entry of 1840 10/13 marks Rebecca’s 36th birthday.]
- Booklet labeled Rebecca Collins 1840 – [Account of the illness and death of her brother Henry, including descriptions of the remedies tried by doctors.]
- Booklet with elephant cover beginning 1844 6/5 – [Mostly describes meetings attended by Rebecca, and visits to prisons, alms houses, and insane asylums. Rebecca mentions two birthdays, entries of 1844 10/13 and 1845 10/13 (40th and 41st). Tiny pressed leaves are laid in, about six pages into diary. Entry of 1846 5/2 mentions dropping off Rebecca’s stepson Percival and son Stephen Grellet at West-town Boarding School. Entry of 1846 7/4 notes “our little English girl” (Mary Forster) attended meeting for the first time at the age of 3. Entry of 1847 5/11 says that Anna is joining her brothers at West-town School. On the following page Rebecca reflects on her motivations for keeping a diary. Entry of 1847 7/5 shows Rebecca and Isaac attending “Merrion” MM.]

Rebecca Collins memoranda, single pages, and poems, 1832-1847 and many undated, one folder (ca. 20 items)

Note: Items include diary entries or memoranda written on single pages or scraps. These are of a similar nature to entries in diary booklets mentioned above. Also included are hand copied poems or lyrics, transcriptions of sermons and extracts, and hand copied quotations (perhaps for Rebecca’s book *Treasured Gems*?)

Miscellaneous

Friends documents, one folder (5 items)

- Certificate for Susannah Stokes to move from the Chesterfield to the Rightstown Monthly Meeting in November 1793. Signed by Isaac Collins as clerk.
- Copy of 1842 letter to “Friends in Ireland” signed by many London Friends in support of Rebecca Collins’s trip to Ireland.
- List of meetings visited by Rebecca Collins and Mary S. Fox in Ireland in 1842.
- Birth certificate for Mary Forster Collins, youngest child of Rebecca & Isaac, born in March 1843.
- Marriage certificate for James Walton and Achsah Croasedale, 1797.

Printed material, one folder (ca. 20 items)

- Paper money: Four bills printed for “The United Colonies” by Hall and Sellers of Philadelphia in 1776. One U.S. bill for 10¢, printed in 1874
- Wedding invitation for Rebecca’s daughter Anna
- Printed flier in German mentioning Rebecca

- Poems clipped from periodicals, printed tracts

Notes on genealogy, Collins, Singer, and Walton families, one folder (ca. 10 items)

Note: Most are handwritten notes and lists. Also,

- Printed obituary for James Morris Walton, husband of Mary Forster Collins.
- Letter to E. Walton (Bess) from "Aunt E. H." [Hallowell?]

MATERIALS REMOVED

None.

PROCESSING INFORMATION

Processed and coded by -- , date..