

**Title:** Quaker Collection

**Dates:** 1691-2023

**Creator/Collector:** Whittier College

**Extent:** 68 boxes (757 linear feet)

**Repository:** Wardman Library-Whittier College. Whittier, California 90602

**Abstract:** The Quakers, also known as the Religious Society of Friends or simply Friends, are a religious group that emphasizes individual relationships with God, abolitionism, pacifism, international volunteer work, and other socially progressive causes. On April 4, 1887, a group of Friends in Pasadena and Los Angeles established a new city in the Puente Hills/Los Nietos Valley that they called Whittier. The Quaker Collection is an extensive grouping of personal papers, novels, non-fiction books, periodicals, and artifacts of daily life developed by Whittier College for purposes of understanding this Quaker heritage.

**Language of Material:** English, German, French, Italian, Spanish

**Access:** The collection is open for research use.

**Publication Rights:** Authorization to publish, quote, or reproduce must be obtained from Wardman Library, Whittier College.

**Preferred Citation:** Quaker Collection. Wardman Library-Whittier College

**Acquisition Information:** Parts of this collection were donated by Sarah and W.V. Coffin (in 1937), Lena Mendenhall, and others.

**Biography and Administrative History:** The Quakers, also known as the Religious Society of Friends or simply Friends, are a religious group founded by George Fox in 1650 that is based in Protestant Christianity. Quaker beliefs emphasize the direct and personal relationship that each individual person can have with God through Jesus Christ, and the therefore inherent spiritual potential that every person represents. On the basis of these beliefs, Friends generally practice abolitionism, pacifism, international volunteer work, and other socially progressive causes. Each community of Friends, organized into regional Yearly Meeting groups, establishes its own Book of Discipline, which seeks to reflect what that community feels God wants for them and guide its members towards a life that meets those desires. As such, each geographical group of

Quakers may have a slightly different interpretation of what it means to successfully live a Quaker life, even if they belong to the same sub-denomination of the Religious Society.

In the 1600s, Friends sought religious freedom by participating in the English settlement of New England, and contributed to the founding of several cities and, later, states. In the 1800s, Quakers began to move into the western parts of North America, founding towns, cities, and schools along the way. In 1887, Aquilla H. Pickering and Hannah Pickering came to Los Angeles from the Midwest. On April 4, 1887, they, along with a group of Friends who already resided in Pasadena and Los Angeles, established a city in the Puente Hills/Los Nietos Valley and named it Whittier. Some of the founding members of this new city include John Painter, T. Elwood Newlin, Jonathan Bailey, Fordyce Grinnell, Hervey and Milton Lindley, Eleazer Andrews, and Washington Hadley.

The Quaker Collection contains seven sub-series: the Sarah Coffin Collection, the Pillsbury Papers, the Mendenhall Papers, the Bailey Family Genealogy Papers, the Johnson Family Papers, the Dombeck Papers, and the Wells-Cammack Papers; Each sub-series has its own, more detailed container list. This finding aid was developed by Paige Harris in 2023, in collaboration with others.

**Scope and Content of Collection:** The Quaker Collection is an extensive grouping of personal papers, novels, non-fiction books, periodicals, and artifacts of daily life developed by Whittier College for purposes of understanding the Quaker heritage of the College and of the city in which the College is based. The Collection focuses broadly on genealogies, including those of the Bailey and Johnson families, records of Quaker settlement of Southern California and the modes of living thereof, and information about both past and current Quaker values and activities on an international scale.

**Sub-series A:** Reference books pertaining to Quaker life

Contents is searchable via Wardman Library catalog:

[https://library.whittier.edu/search/X?SEARCH=\(\\*\)&SORT=D&b=quak](https://library.whittier.edu/search/X?SEARCH=(*)&SORT=D&b=quak)

**Sub-series B:** Quaker books

Contents is searchable via Wardman Library catalog:

[https://library.whittier.edu/search/X?SEARCH=\(\\*\)&SORT=D&b=quak](https://library.whittier.edu/search/X?SEARCH=(*)&SORT=D&b=quak)

**Sub-series C:** Quaker Periodicals

**Sub-series D:** Quaker Yearly Meeting notes and Annual Reports

**Sub-series E:** Sarah Coffin Collection

**Dates:** 1830-1837

**Creator/Collector:** Coffin, Dr. William Vestal (W.V.) (1857-1949)

**Extent:** 17 boxes (28 linear feet)

**Preferred Citation:** Sarah Coffin Collection, Quaker Collection. Whittier College - Wardman Library.

**Biography and Administrative History:** Dr. Coffin was a distant relative of J.G. Whitter and was deeply involved in the founding of what would later become Whittier College, what was then known as the Third Whittier Friends Academy. He, along with Professor John Chawner, was one of the first instructors at the Academy when it opened on September 23, 1891. Dr. Coffin later served on Whittier's first Board of Trustees after the city was incorporated in 1898, a process in which he also participated. He was a leader in the community for the entirety of his life, retiring as President of the Whittier College Board of Trustees in 1920 after eighteen years of service. When, in the late 1930's, he and his wife Sarah moved houses, they donated artifacts from the earliest days of the city to Wardman Library and their home, which was renamed "Earlham Hall" and became housing for female students, to the College.

**Scope and Content of Collection:** The Coffin Collection is an object-based sub-series that reflects what daily life was like for the residents of the newly established Whittier. Certain

objects were procured and used by residents of the new city, while others were brought from the Midwest and were already considered family heirlooms at that time.

**Container List:**

- Boxes E1-E3, E17- Hat boxes
- Boxes E4, E7, E8, E15- Sarah Coffin clothing
- Box E5- General Quaker clothing
- Box E6- Ephemera, hand-made nails, wool spool, nail spikes from an American slave ship, metal construction pegs, wooden napkin ring, button, tile from the Great Fire of San Francisco, eating utensils used by early settlers.
- Box E9- Bonnie Bell Wardman clothing
- Box E10-E13- R.R. Bush Clothing
- Box E14- Bonnet of Mary Pickering
- Box E16- Artifacts of settler life

**Sub-series F:** Pillsbury Papers

**Dates:** 1828-1900s

**Creator/Collector:** Pillsbury, Parker (1809-1898)

**Extent:** 6 boxes (3 linear feet)

**Preferred Citation:** Pillsbury Papers, Quaker Collection. Whittier College - Wardman Library.

**Biography and Administrative History:** Parker Pillsbury (1809-1892) was an American social reformer, minister, lecturer, newspaper editor, and advocate for abolition and women's rights. During his various travels, he wrote letters to his wife, Sarah Pillsbury and their daughter, Nellie. This finding aid was created in part by Abigail Chavez.

**Scope and Content of Collection:** The Pillsbury Papers Collection contains material relating to Parker P. Pillsbury, Helen 'Nellie' Pillsbury, Sarah Pillsbury, and others connected to the Pillsbury family during the years 1828 through the 1900s. The content of the collection

includes correspondence, legal documents, photographs, newspaper articles, clippings, obituaries, envelopes, souvenirs, almanacs, speeches, books, and compositions.

**Container List:**

- Box F1
  - Folder 1. 1848-1853, correspondence primarily to Helen “Nellie” and Sarah Pillsbury from Parker P. Pillsbury, Charles Sargent (Uncle Charley), Frances Ann Sargent (Franny), and various authors. Approx. 47 items.
  - Folder 2. 1854-1855, correspondence primarily to Brainard Cogswell, Helen “Nellie” Pillsbury, and Parker P. Pillsbury from Frances Ann Sargent (Franny), Anna Thomas, Helen “Nellie” Pillsbury, Sarah Pillsbury, Sally Sargent, and various authors. Approx. 100 items.
- Box F2
  - Folder 1. 1857-1860, correspondence primarily to Helen “Nellie” Pillsbury, Sarah Pillsbury, Brainard Cogswell, and Parker P. Pillsbury from various authors. Approx. 57 items.
  - Folder 2. 1860’s, correspondence primarily to Helen “Nellie” Pillsbury and Sarah Pillsbury from various authors. Approx. 51 items.
- Box F3
  - Folder 1: 1870’s, correspondence primarily to Helen “Nellie” Pillsbury, Parker P. Pillsbury, and Charles Sargent from various authors. Approx. 54 items.
  - Folder 2: 1880’s, correspondence primarily from Helen “Nellie” Pillsbury and Parker P. Pillsbury to various family members. Approx. 43 items.
  - Folder 3: 1880’s, correspondence primarily from Helen “Nellie” Pillsbury and Parker P. Pillsbury to various family members. Approx. 46 items.
- Box F4
  - Folder 1: 1890-1889, correspondence primarily from Parker P. Pillsbury to Geo A. Blanchard, Brainard Cogswell, and others. Approx. 24 items.

- Folder 2: 1900's, correspondence primarily from Helen "Nellie" Cogswell nee Pillsbury to her acquaintances and family. Approx. 76 items.
- Folder 3: Undated correspondence. Approx. 43 items.
- Box F5
  - Folder 1: Legal Will and Statement of Brainard Cogswell, 1895. 1 item.
  - Folder 2: Newspaper articles and clippings about Parker P. Pillsbury. Handmade book, *Speech and Letters of Parker P. Pillsbury, Anti-Slavery Standard, 1852, 1854, 1858, and 1861 issues of The National Anti-Slavery Standard*. Handmade book of Parker P. Pillsbury's friends' obituaries. Handmade book of an obituary by James Kay Applebee, *In Memoriam: Theodore Parker*. Approx. 7 items.
  - Folder 3: Envelopes, souvenirs, and photographs regarding the Pillsbury family. Approx. 21 items.
  - Folder 4: Copy of *The Farmer's Almanac*.
- Box F6
  - Folder 1: *Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles, 1883*, written by Parker P. Pillsbury.
  - Folder 2: *A Narrative of the Voyages round the World: Performed by Captain James Cook Vol. II, 1830*, written by Andrew Kippis.
  - Folder 3: Compositions written by Helen "Nellie" Pillsbury Cogswell throughout her life and the album that held them.

**Sub-series G:** Mendenhall Collection

**Dates:** Unknown

**Creator/Collector:** Mendenhall, Lena

**Extent:** 5 boxes (4.6 linear feet)

**Preferred Citation:** Mendenhall Collection, Quaker Collection. Whittier College - Wardman Library.

**Biographical and Administrative History:** Mrs. Lena May Mendenhall, nee England, donated properties in La Habra and Whittier to Whittier College on February 29, 1936, including a building that had once been an Elks Lodge and currently serves as Mendenhall Building. Despite her name, Mrs. Mendenhall was not a close relation of Dr. W. O. Mendenhall, the President of Whittier College from 1934 to 1943.

**Scope and Content of Collection:** The Mendenhall Collection consists of five boxes of papers that have not yet been cataloged.

#### **Sub-series H:** Bailey Family Genealogy Research Papers

**Dates:** 1900-1969

**Creator/Collector:** Bailey, G.L.

**Extent:** 1 box (0.5 linear feet).

**Preferred Citation:** Bailey Family Genealogy Research Papers, Quaker Collection.  
Whittier College - Wardman Library.

**Biographical and Administrative History:** G.L. Bailey served as the librarian at the public library in Ridgeville, Indiana, and conducted research into his family histories. He was related to Jonathan and Rebecca Bailey, Quakers who participated in the founding of the city of Whittier. Jonathan Bailey was born in Virginia to an abolitionist family, lived in Ohio in the 1820s, and settled in Los Angeles in 1885. While in Ohio he had helped to start Wilmington College, and thus other founding members of Whittier gave significant weight to his words. In California he managed real estate and directed building projects in the new city including construction of irrigation tunnels and the Friends Church, among others. In 1887 he was appointed as one of the Trustees of the new Friends' College (which would later become Whittier College), participated in the 1898 petition for Whittier's incorporation as a city, and served as a Trustee of the Whittier Public School District during the 1930s. This collection was processed in part by Alejandra Gaeta in March 2014.

**Scope and Content of Collection:** The collection includes G.L. Bailey's correspondence on the subject of different family genealogies, including typed and longhand written

genealogies of the Bailey family. Smaller collections of genealogies of the Sears, Zell, Thomas, and Payne families are also present, as are newspaper clippings and other print materials not directly related to the family histories.

#### **Sub-series i:** Johnson Family Papers

**Dates:** 1833-1865

**Creator/Collector:** Unknown

**Extent:** 1 box (0.5 linear feet)

**Preferred Citation:** Johnson Family Papers, Quaker Collection. Whittier College - Wardman Library.

**Biographical and Administrative History:** The Johnson Family were some of the first Quaker settlers in Whittier and continued to live in the neighborhood into the modern age. Like many people of their time period, they exchanged letters and other correspondence as a primary mode of communication between family members who were spread out across America, having left their original hometown in search of new land and new opportunities.

**Scope and Content of Collection:** The Johnson Papers are composed primarily of correspondence between various members of the Johnson family. Bills, legal documents, and ephemera from the time period are also included.

#### **Container List:**

- Box 1- Letters, schoolwork, bills, receipts, etc.
  - Folder 1: To Phebe Johnson
  - Folder 2: To Ann Peasley Johnson
  - Folder 3: To Abbn A Johnson
  - Folder 4: To Caroline Johnson
  - Folder 5: To Ollie and Jonas
  - Folder 6: To Maranda Johnson
  - Folder 7: To Edmund J. Barnard
  - Folder 8: To Col. Edmund J.

- Folder 9: To and from Edward Johnson, Esq.
- Folder 10: To Mary E. Johnson
- Folder 11: To Clara C. Johnson
- Folder 12: To Andrew Fraser
- Folder 13: Envelopes
- Folder 14: Caroline C. Johnson bills and receipts
- Folder 15: Mary E. Johnson bills
- Folder 16: Meeting House
- Folders 17-18: Schoolwork, poetry, and writings
- Folder 19: To Unknown
- Folder 20: Scratch paper
- Folder 21: Col. Edward Johnson bills
- Folder 22: Edward Johnson bills
- Folder 23: Legal documents
- Folder 24: Printed material

**Sub-series J:** Dombeck Papers

**Dates:** Unknown

**Creator/Collector:** Douglas and Curtis Dombeck

**Extent:** 2 boxes (1 linear foot)

**Preferred Citation:** Dombeck Papers, Quaker Collection. Whittier College - Wardman Library.

**Biographical and Administrative History:** The acquisition of the Dombeck Papers was arranged by Mike Gharapetian, Interim Library Director.

**Scope and Content of Collection:**

**Container List:**

- Box J1
  - Folder 1: Dombeck books without call numbers

- Folder 2: 1708 marriage petition
- Folder 3: Papers of Elizabeth Fry
- Folder 4: General pamphlets
- Folder 5: Pamphlets r.e. Swarthmore Hall
- Box J2- Correspondence regarding charity work in Vietnam, yearly meeting notes, ledgers

### Sub-series K: Wells-Cammack Papers

**Dates:** 1918-1963

**Creator/Collector:** Unknown

**Extent:** 2 boxes (1 linear foot)

**Preferred Citation:** Wells-Cammack Papers, Quaker Collection. Whittier College -

Wardman Library.

**Acquisition Information:** Donated by Bertha C. Jatnall on behalf of the Estate of Ashton R. Jatnall, possibly in early 1978.

**Biographical and Administrative History:** Florence Wells was a Quaker missionary who taught school in Japan for seven years, between 1911 and 1918. After returning to the United States, she became a student at Columbia University, where she ran a Japanese import shop to support herself and Japanese exchange students. Wells later returned to Japan where she taught at the Tsuda and Jissen universities, freelanced as a newspaper/magazine writer, and edited the English-language manuscripts of Japanese writers. After the Tokyo earthquake of 1923, Wells again returned to the United States, where she was incarcerated at an internment camp during World War Two due to her close ties with Japanese nationals, Japanese Americans, and Japanese culture.

The majority of the letters included within the collection are to Mrs. William L. Blott, a fellow Quaker and patron of the Japanese gift shop that Wells ran. Blott had close ties to Whittier College, including being related by marriage to President Walter F. Dexter and living on a property that abutted the College. The two women discuss several other Quakers, including Edith Sharpless of Haverford, the Dexter family, Herbert Nicholson (a fellow missionary in Japan), Elizabeth Gray Vining (tutor to the Japanese Crown Prince), and Esther Rhoads (tutor to the Royal Family). Wells also includes photos of herself in 1914, 1953, and 1960, and pictures taken of her house in Toyko and a summer residence in the mountains.

**Scope and Content of Collection:**

**Container List:**

- Box K1- Photographs sent to Mrs. Lydia Cammack
- Box K2- Correspondence between Miss Florence Wells and Mrs. Lydia Blott of Whittier

### Sub-series L: General Quaker materials

**Extent:** 39 boxes (41 linear feet)

**Scope and Content of Collection:** The General sub-series of the Quaker Collection includes all those items which are not searchable by catalog and do not pertain to one of the other sub-series, but nevertheless contribute to one's understanding of the Friend's influence on Whittier College and Whittier city. This grouping includes historic bibles, Yearly Meeting and conference notes, card catalogs, sketches and colorized photos of early Quaker poets, marriage certificates, pamphlets, and other ephemera.

#### Container List:

- Boxes 1-6- Works of Penn and Fox.
- Box 11
  - Folder 1: *Diary of a Journey from Indiana to Kansas and Iowa*, 1864.
  - Folder 2: Minutes of the Springboro Monthly Meeting
  - Folder 3: Seneca Preparative Monthly Meeting, 1824-1857
  - Folder 4: Obituary of James Townsend, *Quaker Children, Our Quaker Kin and Allied Families, Do They Miss Me at Home?*
  - Folder 5: *Athenian Society Unvail'd*, 1692
- Box 12
  - Folder 1: *Journal of Mary Trueblood*, 1881
  - Folder 2: Newspaper clippings regarding Abraham Lincoln, 1809
  - Folder 3: Draft of an unknown novel
  - Folder 4: Journal of Clarence E. Pickett (1950-1956)
  - Folder 5: Edith Price's scrapbook of the Westin Boarding School, 1819
  - Folder 6: *Tom King's Study of David Hobson*, 1975
- Boxes 13-14 scrapbooks, photos, and postcards

- Box 15- "Nantucket Quakers" biographical cassettes by Robert J. Leach
- Box 16- Ephemera
- Boxes 17-18- Research material for *Quakers on the Frontier*
- Boxes 19-20- Friends Library books
- Box 21- Yearbooks
- Box 23- Photos from the Orange Grove Meeting
- Box 24- Whittier City ephemera
- Box 25a-c- Manuscripts
- Box 27- Bible of Lydia Reynolds
- Box 28- Travelling chest
- Shard from an unknown gravestone or effigy
- Box 29- Meeting notes for the La Jolla Society of Friends
- Box 30- Contact cards by city of residence
- Box 31- Contact cards by last name
- Box 32- Membership record files
- Box 33- Ephemera, including photos, meeting notes, and leaflets.
- Box 34- Slides from the FNCC 16<sup>th</sup> Triennial slideshow
- Box 35
  - Folder 1: *Quaker Peace and Service Reporter*, 1984-1992
  - Folder 2: *Friends University Focus*, 1972-1986
- Box 36
  - Folder 1: *American Friends Service Committee Pacific Coast Branch*, 1941-1986
  - Folder 2: *American Friends Service Committee*, 1922-1939
  - Folder 3: *Friends Peace Committee AFSC*, 1973-1977
  - Folder 4: *Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas*
  - Folder 5: *Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting*, 1988-1993
  - Folder 6: *Quaker United Nations Office*, 1988-1993

- Folder 7: *Chuck Fager: A Friendly Letter*, 1987-1991
- Box 37
  - Folder 1: *Friends Association for Higher Education*, 1985-1992
  - Folder 2: *The Encourager: Southwest Yearly Meeting*, 1988-1992
  - Folder 3: *The Friends Hospital Advocate*, 1826-1985
  - Folder 4: *College Park Quarterly Meeting Minutes*, 1987-1989
- Box 38- *The Classical Liberal Quaker*
- Box 39- Uncatalogued newsletters
- Filing cabinet papers and photos- accessible for search here:  
<https://poetcommons.whittier.edu/finding/9/>