Collection # M 0207 BV 1610 F 0602-0604 OM 0405

# CALEB MILLS FAMILY PAPERS, 1834–1880

**Collection Information** 

**Biographical Sketch** 

**Scope and Content Note** 

**Series Contents** 

**Cataloging Information** 

# Processed by

Betty Alberty, Sr. Rachel West, and Robert W. Smith Supervised by Paul Brockman 16 March 2004

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF 3 document cases, 2 oversize folders, 1 bound volume, 3 reels of

COLLECTION: microfilm

COLLECTION 1834–1880

DATES:

PROVENANCE: Mrs. Helen Condit, Crawfordsville, Indiana; Mrs. Fred G. Deal,

LaGrange, Indiana; Edward J. Morgan, Indianapolis, Indiana;

Robert Cathcart Martindale, Green Valley, Arizona

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE Microfilm

FORMATS:

RELATED Samuel Porter Williams Papers (M 0160); Samuel Merrill Papers

HOLDINGS: (M 0204); Albert G. Porter Papers (M 0396)

ACCESSION 1931.0001; 1954.0204; 1955.1005; 1957.0306; 1957.0804; NUMBER: 1958.0306; 1961.0803; 1963.0024; 1966.0505; 1994.0351X

NOTES: Collection originally processed by Joan Plungis, March 1980

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Caleb Mills (1806–79) is best known for his theories and activities concerning public education in the state of Indiana as an educator, administrator, minister, and writer. He was born in Dunbarton, New Hampshire, and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1828. Mills then entered Andover Theological Seminary, but took leave in the midst of his training to travel to Kentucky and southern Indiana for two years as Sunday School agent for the Presbyterian Church. During this period Mills saw the need for the improvement in the state's educational programs, especially in common schools and mass education. In December 1833 he accepted a position at the newly opened Wabash Teachers Seminary and Manual Labor College (later Wabash College).

Public education continued to be a concern of Mills while teaching at Wabash. In six addresses to the Indiana state legislature from 1845–50, he presented his proposal for an educational system that would provide a free education for every child by instituting a tax for its support. This tax was to be used to support schools, train and compensate teachers, provide text books, establish the office of state superintendent, and set standards for institutions of higher education. Mills' ideas were the model for the education system adopted by Indiana. Mills served as the state's second Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1854–57. He then returned to Wabash College, where he remained until his death.

Mills married Sarah Marshall in September1833 and moved to Crawfordsville, Indiana, two months later. Their son, Benjamin Marshall Mills (1846–69), figures prominently in the collection. Benjamin Mills first enrolled in Company C, 108<sup>th</sup> Indiana Regiment, and then served as a first lieutenant, Company F, 49<sup>th</sup> U. S. Colored Infantry, stationed in Mississippi, 1864–65. Mills returned to Crawfordsville and attended Wabash College after the war.

#### Sources:

Moores, Charles W. *Caleb Mills and the Indiana School System*. Indianapolis: The Wood-Weaver Printing Company, 1905. Located in Indiana Historical Society Publications, Volume III, No. VI, pp. 359–638. (rr F 521 .I41 v.3). Levering, Julia Henderson. *Historic Indiana*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909.

(rr F 526 .L49 1909), pp.433-436.

Nicholson, Meredith. The Hoosiers. New York: McMillan, 1915. (F526.N63 1915), pp. 79–89.

#### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection centers on the papers of Caleb Mills but includes those of his son, Benjamin Marshall Mills, as well.

Among the Caleb Mills letters are those between Mills from personal friends and colleagues, 1834–76; the Civil War letters from his son Benjamin Marshall Mills, 1864–65; letters from General John P. Hawkins, 1863–64; and letters between Mills and his former students serving in the Union Army during the war, 1862–64. Several of the letters to Mills from his students deal with the recruitment of blacks such as those of James Meteer of the 70<sup>th</sup> Indiana Regiment and the 14<sup>th</sup> U. S. Colored Infantry, 1862–64. The letters of General John P. Hawkins, brigadier general in charge of organizing black troops, address the same topic, as well as the subject of the procurement of officers for the regiments.

The Caleb Mills portion papers also contain a significant amount of information regarding his efforts to improve the state's educational system. Among these items are addresses and lectures, 1845–55, and published writings, 1859–80. Also included are items pertaining to Mills' religious vocation. Among the materials are letters received from missionaries in India and Persia, 1836–46, and sermons 1832–71.

Benjamin Mills' letters and accompanying documents of service contain detailed information about the 49<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry, 1864–67. Two diaries from 1864–65 are also included among the material. The majority of the letters were written by Caleb Mills at Wabash College to Benjamin in Mississippi, 1864–65, but there are letters to Mills from other family members and friends in or near Crawfordsville. Additional materials include Mills' class writings while a student at Wabash, 1866–68.

Included with the original manuscripts are photocopies made in 1963 from selected Mills items in the Lilly Library, Wabash College. There are twenty-four items including the letters of Mills to Edmund O. Hovey (1801–77), one from Selina Wyatt concerning the establishment of a female seminary in the Wabash valley in 1849, and several sermons.

Included in the unnumbered collection guide folder is a clipping from the Indianapolis *News*, 8 March 1958, regarding the Caleb Mills house.

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| "Fifth Annual Message" (Transcript), 1850   | Box 1, Folder 13   |
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| Senate Correspondence, 1859, Address  "Suggestion on Revision of Common School Law," 1859  "New Departures in Collegiate Control and Culture,"  | Box 2, Folder 3 Box 2, Folder 4  |
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# Series 3: Benjamin Marshall Mills Papers, 1864–68; Family Documents, 1851–86

CONTAINER

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### **CATALOGING INFORMATION**

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

- 1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <a href="http://157.91.92.2/">http://157.91.92.2/</a>
- 2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
- 3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
- 4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0207).
- 5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.