

JOHN FINLEY CROWE PAPERS, 1811-1926

Collection #
M 500

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Processed by
Charles Latham
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USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box

COLLECTION DATES: 1811-1926

PROVENANCE: Gift of Mrs. I.S. Allison, Corvallis, Oregon, 1969

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 69.0009

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Finley Crowe (1787-1860) was born in Tennessee (then part of North Carolina) in an era of Indian warfare and

in an area where organized religion and education were not available. In 1802, because of financial difficulties, the family moved to what later became Missouri. Crowe was self-educated, sufficiently successfully so that he ran a frontier school. In 1808 he traveled to Kentucky to obtain more formal education. Having returned to Missouri, he was about to ship a boatload of whisky from Missouri to Kentucky to pay for his schooling when he was converted by a group of Presbyterian elders from North Carolina. Giving up his flirtation with Demon Rum, he continued his education instead by private study, and then, in 1811, by returning to Kentucky and attending Transylvania University.

Crowe was married in 1813 to Esther Alexander. The next year he was sent to Philadelphia to a church gathering as a ruling elder. He spent the year 1814-1815 at Princeton Theological Seminary, which had just been founded and which he found rather disappointing.

Returning to Kentucky in 1815, Crowe founded a school at Shelbyville, and also became involved in the movement to abolish slavery, in which he maintained a continuing interest. Encountering opposition to his ideas in Kentucky, he began to preach in Indiana. He first arrived in Hanover, Indiana, in 1823.

Like New Englanders two hundred years before, Crowe was impressed with the need to train ministers to serve in the developing states of the West. In 1827 he founded, in a log cabin at Hanover, a school which developed first into Hanover Academy (1829) and then Hanover College (1832). His first six students were all sons of ruling Presbyterian elders, and the school continued its strong religious connection. The college modeled its curriculum after that of Miami University in Ohio. It briefly had a law school, and its theological school eventually became McCormick Theological Seminary. In the 1830s the college made it possible for students to pay for their tuition by doing manual labor. This system, laudable in theory, caused financial problems, and Crowe made several trips East to seek financial support. He served as Vice President of the college from 1832 to 1857.

In 1843 President McMaster of Hanover moved the college to Madison, where it became Madison University. Crowe led the movement to found a new school in the old buildings at Hanover, and obtained a new charter in 1844. He continued active in the college until shortly before his death.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of one box of materials, mainly typed transcripts of documents which are in the library of Hanover College. The transcripts were made in 1966-1969 by Sadie Garritt Allison, a great granddaughter of John Finley Crowe. The materials consist principally of correspondence, with some addresses and reminiscences. The collection is broken down into three main sections: biographical; correspondence; and items dealing with Hanover College.

Folders 1-4 give a solid body of information about John Finley Crowe and his children. The correspondence (Folders 5-22) gives information about Crowe's relations to his family and also to his pastoral colleagues and to the colonization movement. Hanover College is represented (Folders 26-27) by a reminiscence, probably by Crowe's son-in-law J.B.Garritt, and by a collection of printed notices from the period 1842-1873.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box 1: Biographical Folder

1. John Finley Crowe autobiography
2. Biographical sketches of JFC by Sadie Crowe Garritt
3. Resolution on death of JFC

4. Children of John Finley and Esther Alexander Crowe

Box 2: Correspondence

Folder

John Finley Crowe

5. Letters to Esther Alexander 1811-1813

6. Letters to his wife 1814-1815

7. Letters to his wife 1817-1855

8. Letters to his children 1844-1859

9. Letters to pastoral colleagues 1844-1854

10. Addresses and incidental writings

11. Letter re: epidemic at Hanover 1832

12. Letters to JFC re: colonization in Liberia 1850-1851

13. Copies of notes and bills

Esther A. Crowe

14. Letters to JFC 1814-1836

Children

15. Letters from Eliza Crowe 1833-1836 and her widower, W.H.Bruner 1837

16. Letters from James Blythe Crowe and his wives 1840-1891

17-18. Letters from Mary Ann Crowe (Thompson) and Charles Kilgore Thompson 1833-1859

19. Letters from Samuel Crowe 1845-1959

20. Letters from Sarah Crowe to Caroline Coulter 1855

21. Letters of Sarah Crowe Garritt 1846-1859

22. Letters of Thomas Searle Garritt 1844-1859

Grandchildren

23. Letters from John F. Crowe 1866, 1896

24. Reminiscence by Madge Garritt Gilchrist 1920

25. Writings by Mary Esther Thompson Allen

Box 3: Hanover College

Folder

26. Account of Hanover College [by Joshua Bolles Garritt 1905]

27. Notices from Hanover College 1842-1973

CATALOGUING INFORMATION

MAIN ENTRY: Crowe, John Finley, 1787-1860

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Hanover College

Hanover Academy

Back to African movement

Universities and colleges--Indiana--Hanover

Presbyterian Church--Indiana--Hanover

Church colleges--Indiana--Hanover

Education--Indiana--Hanover

Hanover (Ind.)

Liberia--History--1847-1944

Autobiographies--Indiana--Hanover

Reminiscences--Indiana--Hanover

END