

BENJAMIN HARRISON COLLECTION, 1853-1943

Collection #'s
M 0132
OM 0325

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Processed by
Charles Latham
November 1988
Alexandra S. Gressitt
May 1995, October 1996

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	2 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1853-1943
PROVENANCE:	The papers in this collection have been obtained primarily by purchase, but also by gift from various dealers and auction houses.
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:	SC 2402, Low Water Mark Committee; M 0387, Russell B. Harrison; M 0364, William Henry Harrison; M 0026, Alexander Thompson Britton

ACCESSION NUMBER: This collection includes multiple accession numbers. For a complete listing through 1995, of accession numbers see accession file number 1941.0306. Additions: 1996.0406, 1996.0560, 1997.0005, 1998.0137, 1998.0139

NOTES: This collection is periodically added to as materials become available. A calendar of the collection is available in the IHS Library.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901), twenty-third President of the United States, was born in North Bend, Ohio, the son of John Scott Harrison and Elizabeth Irwin. He was the grandson of President William Henry Harrison and the great grandson of Benjamin Harrison, member of the Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Harrison attended Farmers College in Cincinnati, then transferred to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, from which he graduated in 1852. For the next two years he studied law with a Cincinnati firm, Storer and Gwynne, and in 1853 married his first wife, Caroline Lavinia Scott. He had two children by this marriage, Russell B. and Mary (Mrs. James R. McKee). In 1854 he moved to Indianapolis and began to build up a law practice. He became an active Republican as soon as that party was started, served as secretary of the central state committee, and was elected, first city attorney, 1857, and then reporter of the state Supreme Court.

In 1862 Harrison was appointed colonel of the 70th Indiana Regiment, which served in Tennessee, in the Atlanta campaign, and in the Carolinas. He returned to his legal practice, working with a succession of partners. In 1876 he ran for Governor of Indiana, but was defeated by the Democratic candidate, "Blue Jeans" Williams. From 1879 to 1881 he was a member of the Mississippi River Commission. In 1881 he was admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court and also elected Senator from Indiana. During his single term he was chairman of the committee on territories; espoused fair and effective railroad regulation; supported general pension legislation to replace the individual bills then the practice; and championed the work of the Mississippi River Commission.

In 1888 he was nominated for President on the eighth ballot as a compromise candidate between James G. Blaine and Chester A. Arthur. He won in the electoral college though not in the popular vote. He appointed Blaine his Secretary of State, and the latter embarked upon a "spirited foreign policy" which included a dispute with Germany over Samoa, the proposed annexation of Hawaii, a dispute with Chile, and a brilliantly conducted Pan-American Congress.

Harrison, elected on a platform favoring Civil Service reform, was nevertheless criticized for making political appointments. In practice he respected the classified list, and expanded it from approximately 27,000 to 38,000 positions. Important legislation passed during his Presidency included the McKinley Tariff, the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, statehood for six Western states, and the opening of Oklahoma to settlement. A number of factors caused him to fail of reelection in 1892.

Harrison was a devoted churchman, taught Sunday School at the First Presbyterian Church, and supported progressive ideas in the church as a whole.

The Harrison family was a good deal in evidence during his sojourn in the White House. President Harrison showed an especial fondness for his grandson, "Baby McKee" [Benjamin H. McKee]. His daughter, Mary McKee, was often there. Mrs. Harrison's niece, Mary Scott Dimmick, seems to have acted as a sort of secretary. Caroline Scott Harrison died in 1892. In 1896 Harrison married Mrs. Dimmick (Mary Lord Harrison), and had a daughter, Elizabeth (Walker).

In 1893 Harrison returned to Indianapolis and resumed his law practice. He represented Venezuela successfully in the arbitration of that country's boundary dispute with Great Britain in 1899. He also did a good deal of writing. At the

suggestion of Edward W. Bok, editor of the "Ladies Home Journal," he wrote a series of articles on the nature of the federal government and the duties of a President. These were published as "This Country of Ours" in 1897.

Caroline (Carrie) Lavinia Scott Harrison was born 1 October 1832 in Oxford, Ohio the third daughter of John Witherspoon Scott and Mary Potts Neal. Her father was a Presbyterian minister and professor of mathematics and natural science at Miami University. She attended Oxford Female Institute, where in her senior year (1851-52) she was listed among the faculty as an assistant in piano music. Following graduation she taught music for one year in a girls school in Carrollton, Kentucky. On October 20, 1853 she married Benjamin Harrison. Together they had three children Russell B. (1854) Mary Scott (1858) and a daughter who died at birth in 1861.

Caroline Scott Harrison was an accomplished pianist and artist and is noted for her painting of flowers on china. For thirty years (1860-90) she served on the Board of Managers of the Indianapolis Orphans Asylum (Records of this organization can be found in M66), was active with the Presbyterian Church, a leader in the Ladies Patriotic Association and Ladies Sanitary Committee. During the presidential years she was active in local and national charities, such as the Aid Society of Garfield Hospital and the Washington City Orphan Asylum. She became the first president-general of the Daughters of the American Revolution when it was organized in 1890, and was active in the restoration and maintenance of the White House. She died 25 October 1892 in the White House and is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis.

Mary Scott [Lord] Dimmick Harrison was born in Honesdale, Pennsylvania in 1858, the daughter of Russell Farnham Lord and Elizabeth Mayhew Scott. Her father was chief engineer of the Delaware and Hudson Canal. She attended a private school in Princeton, NJ and Elmira College in NY. In 1881 she married Walter Erskine Dimmick, a son of the attorney-general of Pennsylvania; he died six weeks after the wedding. During the presidency of Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893) she was a frequent guest at the White House, finally being persuaded by her aunt, (Caroline Scott Harrison) to live with them.

On 6 April 1896 Mrs Dimmick married Benjamin Harrison at St. Thomas Protestant Episcopal Church in New York City. During the next five years the couple travelled widely, partly because of Harrison's role in settling the Venezuelan boundary dispute and as a delegate at the Hague Peace Conference. They had one daughter Elizabeth (b. 1897) who studied law and was admitted to the bar of both Indiana and New York. She married James Blaine Walker, Jr.

After 1913 Mary Lord Harrison moved to New York with her daughter. During WWI she directed the entertainment bureau of the Officers Service Department of the New York War Camp Community Service, and served for more than 25 years as treasurer of the Committee of One Hundred, a Republican Woman's organization. She died in New York City in 1946, and is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis.

Mary Scott Harrison McKee was born 3 April 1858, the daughter of Benjamin Harrison and Caroline Lavinia Scott. She was educated in a private academy in Indianapolis and after high school attended Ogontz Seminary in Pennsylvania. In November 1884 she married James Robert McKee and they had two children: Benjamin H. McKee (b. 1887) known as Baby McKee, and Mary Lodge McKee (b. 1888). She was active in organizations in Washington, D.C., New York City and Greenwich, Connecticut and Indianapolis where she was a member of the Caroline Scott Harrison Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Propyleum, and the Woman's Club.

Mary (Mame/May) S. Saunders, from Nebraska, married Russell B. Harrison (1854-1936) the son of Benjamin and Caroline Scott Harrison in Omaha, Nebraska 1884. They had two children, Marthena (1888-1972) and William Henry (b. 1896).

John Witherspoon Scott, (1800-1892) the father of Caroline Scott Harrison was a Presbyterian Minister and professor of mathematics and natural science at Miami University.

Sources: Material in collection
Dictionary of American Biography
Who Was Who in America, Volumes I and II
Indiana Biographical Series

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This artificially created collection, covering the years 1853-1943, represents a variety of materials, mainly correspondence to, from, and among Harrison family members and some legal documents from Benjamin Harrison's professional career. The materials have been collected, largely by purchase, from a number of different sources. It includes some transcripts of materials found in other repositories. To facilitate researcher access the materials have been divided into six series: I. Benjamin Harrison Papers; II. Caroline Scott Harrison Papers; III. Mary Scott Dimmick/Mary Lord Harrison Papers; IV. Mary Harrison McKee Papers; V. Mary (Mame) Saunders Harrison Papers; and VI. John Witherspoon Scott Papers. The collection has been calendared; a printed copy of the calendar is available in the IHS Library.

SERIES I: Benjamin Harrison Papers, 1853-1901

Series I includes personal and professional papers, memorabilia and photographs relating to Benjamin Harrison for the years 1853-1901. Professional papers, largely documents written and or notarized by Harrison in his legal practice in Indianapolis during the years 1855-1870 are filed in Box 1, folders 1-7. Other records in the Indiana Historical Society relating to Marion County Court activity are located in collections M 0553 and M 0568. Collection SC 1998 Marion County includes additional information on the 1859 legal proceedings, James Gentle vs. Charles Brown (Box 1, folder 5).

Personal and professional correspondences of Benjamin Harrison both to and from, is filed chronologically in Boxes 1, folders 8-18 and Box 2, folders 1-10, and covers the years 1853-1901. Included in the collection are letters relating to his Civil War service commanding the 70th Regiment Indiana Volunteers; letters written to his first wife, Caroline Scott Harrison, during the Civil War and while President; and letters written to his second wife, Mary Lord Harrison. Correspondence with Edward Bok (editor, 1863-1930) concerning articles Harrison was writing for the Ladies Home Journal; with Algernon Sidney Pollock (politician, 1830-1897) regarding the Utah Commission of which he was a member 1882-1886; with Smiley Newton Chambers (lawyer, Republican, b. 1845) of Vincennes, Indiana and with Margaret (Cos. Mag) Peltz of St. Louis, a family friend, are also found in the collection. Memorabilia such as admission tickets and programs are located in Box 2 folders 11-17 and two photographs in folder 18.

This series includes letters to or from: Edward H. Ammidown; Harvey Bates; Edward Bok; George S. Boutwell; Benjamin H. Brewster; Adeline Briggs; Noble C. Butler (see also collection M35); Howard Cale; Emily P. Carter; William Carter; Smiley N. Chambers; Person Colley Cheney; George F. Chittenden; James T. Christy; James W. Clarke; J. S. Clarkson; Schuyler Colfax (see also collection M55); John O. Cravens; Jefferson C. Davis; H. F. De Puy; Mary Scott Dimmick; George F. Edmunds; Joseph Fracker; James S. Frazer; James A. Garfield; R. M. Gilder; John B. Glover; Jesse C. Green; Richard Gunther; Charles H. Harris; Anna Harrison; Caroline Scott Harrison; Mary Lord Harrison; May Harrison (Mrs. Russell B.); Russell Harrison; Charles Hedges; Thomas Jernegan; J. Edgar Jones; Sarah Ulrich Kelley; Luther Kountze; George F. Lasher; Russell F. Lord; Benjamin H. McKee; Louis T. Michener; Anna Morris; Oliver P. Morton; T. A. Myres; Samuel J. Niccolls; Lazarus Noble; James Oliver; Godlove S. Orth; Algernon S. Paddock; Margaret Peltz; T. Stewart Pearce; Gilbert A. Pierce; Winslow S. Pierce; C. M. Rack; C. H. Reeve; George G. Reilly; W. J. Robertson; R. K. Shaw; David T. Sleeth; E. M. Snook; David E. Snyder; Henry Strong; Robert S. Taylor; Robert M. Teats; Richard W. Thompson; E. F. Tibbotts; Albion W. Tourgee; George A. Townsend; Harriet Taylor Upton; John Wanamaker; Jesse W. Weik; Everett P. Wheeler; James Grant Wilson; and William A. Woods.

SERIES II: Caroline Scott Harrison Papers, 1853-1892

Series II (Box 2, folders 19-22) includes personal correspondence and memorabilia relating to Caroline Scott Harrison. It includes an early letter to her brother (1853); a series of letters to Mrs. Person Colley Cheney [Sarah (White) Keith] wife of the Governor of New Hampshire and an unsigned letter, probably written in 1889, giving an ironic view of

how Mrs. Harrison may have felt about press criticism when she first came to the White House.

This series includes letters to or from Helen M. R. Aldrich; Mrs. Campbell; Sarah (White) Keith, Mrs. Person Colley Cheney; Mrs. Chapin C. Foster; Sally Page Nelson Hughes; and Minnie Scott Perrin.

SERIES III: Mary Scott Dimmick/Mary Lord Harrison Papers, 1891-1943

Series III (Box 2, folders 23-24) includes personal correspondence relating to Mary Lord Harrison. It includes two letters written to Miss Lanigan, 1891-1892, as Mary Scott Dimmick; a letter to painter William T. Matthews about a Presidential portrait; a letter to General Foster about her pension as a Presidential widow; a long letter to Charles W. Fairbanks concerning the selection of a biographer for her late husband; and a series of letters, 1939-1940, to T. Duane Upton about the loan of a picture of William Henry Harrison; and a lengthy letter in which the former first lady reveals her thoughts on religion, personal experiences and her husband's epithet and comments on her opposition to the New Deal and a Fourth term for Franklin D. Roosevelt. A wedding announcement for Benjamin Harrison and Mary Scott Dimmick and a birth announcement for Elizabeth Harrison are also in this series.

Letters to William V. Alexander; Mr. Boos; Alice Darrell; Charles W. Fairbanks (see also Collection M 100); General [Robert S.] Foster; Miss Lanigan; William T. Matthews; Mr. Meyer; Felix Roppert; George A. Stowe; and T. Duane Upton are found in this series.

SERIES IV: Mary Harrison McKee (Mrs. James R.) Papers, 1889-1909

Series IV (Box, folders 25-27) includes personal correspondence from Mary Harrison McKee to Miss Lanigan, 1891, concerning publication of an article on "The Training of Children"; to a family friend Maggie Peltz and her daughter Eugenia and to Edward W. Bok concerning possible publication of articles.

Recipients of letters in this series include: Edward W. Bok; Mrs. Collins; Miss Lanigan; Mrs. Lathrop; Eugenia Peltz; and Maggie W. Peltz.

SERIES V: Mary (Mame) S. Saunders Harrison (Mrs. Russell B.) Papers, 1890-1892

Series V (Box 2, folder 28) includes three letters from Mame Saunders Harrison to Eugenia Peltz. They concern illnesses of the Harrison baby and of Senator Saunders and a projected visit of the Peltzes to the Harrisons during a stay at Saratoga, N.Y.

SERIES VI: John Witherspoon Scott Papers, 1889

Series VI, (Box 2, folder 29) includes one letter from John Witherspoon Scott, father of Caroline Scott Harrison, to a Mrs. Blackman, concerning autographs.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Series I: Benjamin Harrison Papers, 1853-1901

Box 1

Folder Contents

- | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 1-3 | Professional Papers, 23 April 1855 |
| 4 | Professional Papers, June 1855-1856 |
| 5 | Professional Papers, 1857-1859 |
| 6 | Professional Papers, 1860-1862 |

- 7 Professional Papers, 1866-1870
- 8 Correspondence, 1853-1863
- 9 Correspondence, May-November 1864
- 10 Correspondence, December 1864-1865
- 11 Correspondence, 1876-1878
- 12 Correspondence, 1879-1880
- 13 Correspondence, January-May 1881
- 14 Correspondence, June-December 1881
- 15 Correspondence, 1882-1883
- 16 Correspondence, 1884
- 17 Correspondence, 1885-February 1886
- 18 Correspondence, April-December 1886

**Box 2:
Folder Contents**

- 1 Correspondence, 1887
- 2 Correspondence, March-July 1888
- 3 Correspondence, October-December 1888
- 4 Correspondence, 1889-1890
- 5 Correspondence, 1891-1892
- 6 Correspondence, 1893-1894
- 7 Correspondence, 1895
- 8 Correspondence, 1896 (see also OM 0325)
- 9 Correspondence, 1897-1898
- 10 Correspondence, 1900-1901, n.d.
- 11 Memorabilia: Poem, "The Battle of Fort Meigs: by Emily P. Carter, ca. 1888
- 12 Memorabilia: Inauguration, March 1889
- 13 Memorabilia: George Washington Centennial, 1889
- 14 Memorabilia: Presidential Tour, 1891
- 15 Memorabilia: Menus, 1891-1892
- 16 Memorabilia: Admission Tickets, 1890-1896

- 17 Memorabilia: Executive Envelopes, n.d.
18 (VC) Photographs: n.d., 1892

Series II: Caroline Scott Harrison Papers, 1853-1892

- 19 Correspondence: 1853, 1888-1890
20 Correspondence: 1891
21 Correspondence: 1892, n.d.
22 Memorabilia: "Caroline Scott Harrison" by Minnie Scott Perrin; and clippings, n.d.

Series III: Mary Scott Dimmick/Mary Lord Harrison Papers, 1891-1941

- 23 Correspondence, 1891-1916
24 Correspondence, 1935-1943, n.d.

Series IV: Mary Harrison McKee (Mrs. James R.) Papers, 1889-1909

- 25 Correspondence: 1889-1892
26 Correspondence: 1893-1896
27 Correspondence: 1897-1909, n.d.

Series V: Mary S. (Mame) S. Saunders Harrison (Mrs. Russell B.) Papers, 1890-1892

- 28 Correspondence, 1890-1892

Series VI: John Witherspoon Scott Papers, 1889

- 29 Correspondence, 1889

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](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

END