

Finding Aid to the Collection of Mary Low Carver Materials LOW.1

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Colby College Special Collections
5150 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, ME, 04941
(207) 859-5150
speccoll@colby.edu

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Summary Information

Repository	Colby College Special Collections
Creator	Carver, Mary Low, 1850-1926
Title	Collection of Mary Low Carver Materials
Date	1871-2005 and undated.
Extent	0.25 Linear feet
Language	English

Preferred Citation note

Collection of Mary Low Carver Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.

Biographical Note

Mary Caffrey Low (later Carver), born on March 22, 1850, in Waterville, Maine, was the first woman to graduate from Colby College. In 1871, she enrolled as the college's first female student, to graduate four years later in 1875. She was one of the first women in New England to receive a regular A.B. degree. Low was the only female student at Colby until the fall of 1873, when she was joined by four other women, among them Louise Helen Coburn. In 1874, Low co-founded the Sigma Kappa Sorority. Low was the first woman to appear on the rolls of Sigma Kappa and the first to preside over an initiation. She was also the first woman to be invited to join the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. Low also delivered the valedictory address to her class at graduation. In 1916, Colby awarded Low the degree of Litt.D. Low is known as the "grandmother of coeducation at Colby." In 1890, the president of Colby College initiated a plan to divide women and men into separate classes at the college. Low, along with Louise Coburn and several other alumnae, wrote and sent a petition protesting the formation of a separate women's division at Colby. The division was soon approved, however, and Colby did not go back to being truly coeducational until 1969. After graduation Low married Leonard D. Carver, a graduate of Colby who became the Maine State Librarian. Low herself became a librarian and worked as a cataloguer in the Maine State Library for many years. Low had a daughter, Ruby Carver Emerson, and a son, Dwight, who died at the age of 5. Low later lived with her daughter in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Low died on March 4, 1926, at the age of 76.

Scope and Contents note

The Low Collection contains various materials gathered about Mary Low Carver. The collection includes photographs of and clippings about Mary Low Carver, correspondence about the acquisition of Low's Sigma Kappa sorority pin and the pin itself, as well as a copy of the manuscript written by Low protesting the formation of a separate women's division at Colby.

Arrangement note

Materials arranged in 7 series: Correspondence, Published Materials, Clippings, Personal Documents, Photographs, Biographical Notes, and Memorabilia.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Colby College Special Collections

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Materials to be used on site during regular Special Collections hours or by appointment. Photocopying or scanning may be possible at discretion of staff for nominal fee. Materials may be protected by copyright.

Provenance and Acquisition Note

Materials acquired via gift or purchase.

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Clippings
- Correspondence
- Photographs

Geographic Name(s)

- Waterville, Maine

Subject(s)

- Alumnae and alumni

- Coeducation
- Colbiana
- Colby College--History
- Education of women
- Sigma Kappa Sorority

Correspondence.

Collection Inventory

Correspondence. 1985 - 2005 and undated. 4 Folders.

Folder 1: Correspondence between Mary Low Carver and Louise Helen Coburn. August 7, 1890 - March 3, 1891. 1 Sheet.

Related Archival Materials note

See correspondence between Mary Low Carver and Louise Helen Coburn on coeducation of women at Colby College, in Series: Correspondence, Folder 1, in the Collection of Louise Helen Coburn Materials.

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Coburn, Louise Helen, 1856-1949

Folder 2: Letter from RDH Emerson to Mr. Dyer. Undated. 1 ALS.

Letter from Ruby DH Emerson (Mary Low's daughter) to Mr. Dyer, Editor of the Alumnus. April 9, unknown year. Handwritten, 1 Sheet, Double Sided.

Folder 3: Materials Regarding Mary Low's Family History. 3 Photocopies.

Letter from Barbara Clarkson, Sigma Kappa Sorority, to the Town Clerk, Waterville, Maine. July 29, 1985. 1 Photocopied TLS.

Photocopies of Death Records of John P. Caffrey and Ivory H. Low. Undated. 1 Sheet.

Published Materials.

Photocopy of Pedigree Chart for Mary Caffrey Low. Undated. 1 Sheet.

Folder 4: Sorority Pin Correspondence. 1999. 2 TLS, 2 ALS.

Letter from Margaret F. Viens, Director, Alumni Relations, Colby College, to Mrs. Ellen McNamara. November 29, 1999. 1 Sheet, Typed.

Letter from Ellen McNamara to Margaret Viens. December 8, 1999. 1 Sheet, Handwritten.

Letter from Margaret F. Viens, Director, Alumni Relations, Colby College, to Mrs. Ellen McNamara. December 14, 1999. 1 Sheet, Typed.

Letter from Nancy Fox, Office of Alumni Relations, Colby College, to Nancy. December 14, 1999. 1 Sheet, Handwritten.

Folder 5: Correspondence Regarding Fanny Low Sampler. 1 Sheet.

Printout of an email from Barbara Gunvaldsen, Fairfield Historical Society, to Stephen Collins, Colby College, which was forwarded to Patricia Burdick and E.H. Smith, Colby College, regarding a sampler created in 1834 by Fanny Low, aunt of Mary Low. March 4, 2005 - March 7, 2005. 1 Sheet, Printed.

Published Materials. Undated. 2 Folders.

Folder 6: Address by Mary Low Carver, Unknown Publication Source. Undated. 1 Printed Copy, 1 Photocopy.

Address by Mrs. Mary Low Carver on acceptance and ratification of the name of the Mary Low Residence Hall. Includes a poem, "Mary C. Low Hall," by Alice Lena Cole Kleene. Undated. 4 Pages.

Clippings.

Photocopy of "Address by Mrs. Mary Low Carver." Undated. 2 Pages, 2 Up.

Folder 7: Coeducation at Colby. Undated. 1 Printed Item.

Printed copy of "Coeducation at Colby," Low's protest against a separate women's division at the college, from an unknown published source. Undated. 16 Pages.

See Also

Correspondence between Mary Low Carver and Louise Helen Coburn regarding coeducation at Colby, in the Collection of Louise Helen Coburn Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Series: Correspondence, Folder 1.

Controlled Access Headings

Personal Name(s)

- Coburn, Louise Helen, 1856-1949

Clippings. 1875 - 1985 1 folder.

Folder 8: Clippings related to Mary Low Carver. 1875 - 1985. 11 Articles.

"The Alcestis of Euripides," English oration delivered at the recent commencement of Colby University. By Mary C. Low, of Waterville, Me. Printed in "The Watchman and Reflector." August 19, 1875. 1 Sheet (plus photocopy).

"A Pleasant Evening," article from The Colby Echo. June 12, 1897. 2 Sheets (Photocopied).

Clippings.

"The Man of the Musket," poem written by Mary Low Carver (Mrs. L.D. Carver), published in The Colby Echo, vol.1, no. 17, p. 3. 1898. 1 Sheet (Photocopied).

"Respectfully Dedicated To Whom It May Concern." June 10, 1899. 1 Sheet (plus photocopy).

"Maine's First Co-Ed." 1911. 1 Sheet (Photocopied).

"First Woman In Alumnae Is Dead," article in The Colby Echo. March 10, 1926. 3 Sheets (Photocopied).

Mary Low Carver, '75, from The Colby Alumnus, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 183-184. 1925 - 1926. 2 Sheets (Photocopied).

"Pioneer of Women Students," published in The Colby Echo. February 13, 1929. 2 Sheets (Photocopied).

"Mary Low Carver: A Pioneer in the Field of Women's Education," published in the Lewsiston Journal Magazine Section, pp. A-6 - A-8. March 5, 1949. 3 Sheets (plus photocopy).

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

Extremely fragile original. Please use photocopy for use.

"History From Our Files," from the Portland Press Herald. June 25, 1953. 1 Sheet (plus photocopy).

"English Department to Award Prizes in Annual Contest," published in The Colby Echo. March 9, 1956. 2 Sheets (Photocopied).

"Mary Caffrey Low Carter (sic) was Colby's first woman graduate," published in The Morning Sentinel. March 27, 1985. 1 Sheet (plus photocopy).

Personal Documents.

Personal Documents. 1896 and undated. 2 Folders.

Folder 9: Sigma Kappa Odes. 1896. 1 Booklet.

Booklet of Sigma Kappa Odes. 1896. 15 Pages.

Folder 10: Miscellaneous. Undated. 3 Items.

"Toasts." Undated. 1 Sheet, Handwritten.

Page with written quote from Mary Low Carver. March 22nd. 1 Sheet, Handwritten.

Typed card indicating that a copy of Robinson's first published book, "The Children of the Night," belonged to Mary Low Carver, and was presented to the Library by her daughter. Undated. 1 Card, Typed.

Related Archival Materials note

See Edwin Arlington Robinson Collection.

Photographs. Undated. 1 Folder.

Folder 11: Photographs of Mary Low Carver and Sigma Kappa. Undated. 3 Mounted Photographs (Prints), 1 Black and White Copy Print (Enlarged), 1 Printed Photograph.

Biographical Notes. Undated. 1 Folder.

Memorabilia.

Folder 12: Biographical Notes About Mary Low Carver. Undated. 1 Typed Card, 2 Handwritten Sheets, 1 Typed Sheet.

"Mary Low Carver." Undated. 1 Typed Card.

Handwritten notes on Mary Low Carver, unknown author. Undated. 2 Handwritten Sheets.

Informational sheet on the Mary Low Carver Poetry Prize. Undated. 1 Printed Sheet.

Memorabilia. Undated. 1 Folder.

Folder 13: Sorority Pin. Undated. 1 Enclosure.

Mary Low Carver's Sigma Kappa Sorority Pin. Undated. 1 Pin in Cloth Case.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

On back of pin is engraved: MLC '75.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Sigma Kappa Sorority
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