

**Beard Family
Papers, 1831-1945
MSA 355**

Introduction

This collection consists of family genealogy, correspondence, photographs, and poetry from the Beard family of Orange, Vermont, for the period from 1831 to 1945. Family member Elsie Beard gave this collection to the Vermont Historical Society in March 2005 (ms. acc. no. 2005.15). It is housed in one archival flip top box (.5 linear feet)

Biographical Note

Joseph Cleveland Beard, Jr. (1775-1866), a member of the fifth generation of the family in America, came to Orange, Vermont around 1800 with his first wife Rachel Fisk (ca. 1780-1804) from Westminister, Massachusetts. They had three children, only two of whom survived: Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph married second Releaf Kendall. They had eleven children, ten of whom survived: Kendall Beard, Rachel, Ira, Cleveland, William, Martin, Nancy, Alvin, Samuel E., and Hiram C.

Kendall Beard was born in 1805 in Orange, Vermont. He married Roxcinda Richardson on December 4, 1823. They lived on the family farm and had five children: Louisa, Loren, George P., Ellen, and Royal Edson. Royal Edson married Flora Curtis on February 22, 1875. They had two surviving children: Edna Louisa (1875-1928) and Frank K. (1887-1976).

Edna Louisa Beard (1877-1928), daughter of Royal Edson and Flora Curtis Beard, was active in the women's suffrage movement and was elected the first woman to the Vermont House of Representatives in 1920 and to the Vermont Senate in 1922.

Scope and Contents

The correspondence consists of the original letters along with typewritten transcriptions. Most, but not all, are to Joseph Cleveland Beard and Releaf (Kendall) Beard from their children and grandchildren, and from nieces and nephews who were scattered in New England and the Midwest. The writers give very well-written accounts of the life of the times, descriptions of their locations and, of course, the state of health of the family members.

The earliest letters were written by Joseph Beard, mainly to his children, relating family news and describing the state of religion in Orange, Vermont in the 1830s. Many of the later letters were written by Hiram C. Beard and his children while living in Victor, Illinois. Of particular interest are the letters written during the Civil War in which Hiram describes some of his financial difficulties. There is also a letter written by Benjamin Beard describing the death of his son Calvin who had enlisted in the Seventh Illinois

Volunteer Regiment and one written by Cleveland Beard who enclosed a transcript of two letters written by his son Cleveland, Jr. while serving in Ninth New Hampshire Volunteer Regiment.

The collection also includes letters written by Nancy Beard during various times of her life, including acting as housekeeper for her brother Hiram, during her widowhood in Lowell, Massachusetts where she worked in the mills, and after her second marriage with a widower from Pittsford, Vermont with whom she was barely acquainted.

The genealogy material includes a historical sketch of the first seven generations, a notebook of vital records by Edna L. Beard and a number of family sheets copied from said notebook.

There is a bound book of poetry by George Petrie Beard and wife Luna (Griswold) Beard and by their daughter Luna Caroline Beard. Also a poem for the golden wedding anniversary (1878) of Kendall Beard and Roxcinda Richardson as well as one to “mother” by Fannie H. Beard.

War ration books for the Frank K. Beard family are part of the collection.

Related Collections

The VHS museum collection includes a sampler created by made by Roxcinda Richardson, ca. 1814 (ms. acc. no. 2005.15).

Edna Beard’s high school diploma, issued by Spaulding Graded School in 1896, is in Bside C Biography—Beard, Edna.

Inventory

- MSA 355:01 Genealogy
- :02 Correspondence, 1831-1859
- :03 _____, 1861-1864
- :04 _____, 1865-1867
- :05 Poetry
- :06 Photographs of Edna Louisa Beard and family
- :07 Ration books & red point tokens, 1941-1945

William Lowe
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