

**Eli Hawley Canfield (1817-1898)**  
**Family Papers, 1806-1919**  
**Doc 412-417**

**Introduction**

The Eli Hawley Canfield Papers were given to the Vermont Historical Society some time before 1927. The collection is made up of correspondence, 1806-1919 (bulk 1850-1898), of Eli Canfield, an Episcopal minister, native to Arlington, Vermont; and his son, James Canfield, an educator and administrator at Kansas State University, University of Nebraska, and Ohio State University. There are also a few letters of James' daughter, Dorothy Canfield Fisher. The collection is housed in six record center boxes, and occupies six linear feet of shelf space.

The papers were originally processed in 1938, and then indexed by VHS volunteer Loriman Brigham. Although the location of the papers has changed the annotated index sheets should still be consulted for item-level information on the contents of the collection. This finding guide was prepared as part of grant project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in 1996.

**Biographical Note**

Eli Hawley Canfield was born June 8, 1817, in Arlington, Vermont, the son of Nathaniel Canfield and Almera Hawley Canfield. He received his education at public and private schools in Arlington, and spent some time at Burr and Burton Seminary in Manchester, Vermont, and Union Academy, East Bennington, finishing in 1834. He taught school until 1836 in the Arlington district school and then at Attleborough, Pennsylvania, and at St. James Hall Episcopal Prep School. In 1841 he enrolled at the Alexandria (Virginia) Theological Seminary, graduating in 1844. He spent five years in Delaware, Ohio, during which time he married Martha Crafts Hulme of Pt. Pleasant, New Jersey. He spent a few months in Philadelphia, then went to St. Peter's in New York City where he remained until January 1853, when he went to Brooklyn's Christ Church for seventeen years. Martha Canfield died in 1855 and Eli sent their children to Vermont to live with his mother. According to the *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont* by Hiram Carleton (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1903), Martha and Eli had four children although apparently only son James and daughter Martha survived childhood. When Eli's health began to fail he left Brooklyn and spent 1870-1871 in Vermont. He then returned to New York for less than a year and spent the rest of his active life doing short term assignments in churches that needed help including churches in North Adams, Massachusetts; Florida; Troy and Hoosick, New York; Arlington, Bennington, and Manchester, Vermont; and Cornell College in Ithaca, New York. In the fall of 1887 he suffered a stroke that affected his eyesight and in 1890 he became paralyzed on one side. Eli Hawley Canfield died June 3, 1898.

Eli Hawley Canfield's son, James H., was born in 1847 in Delaware, Ohio. He lived in Brooklyn until 1855 when his mother died. At that time he was sent to live with grandmother Canfield, but returned to his father in Brooklyn at age fourteen to pursue his education at the Polytechnic Institute. He received his college degree from Williams College and upon graduation went west to work on the railroad for two years. He then studied law in Jackson, Michigan, and practiced law at Joseph, Michigan, 1872-1877, although he was unhappy with the profession. In 1877, through the efforts of a friend and colleague, he became a professor of political economy and English literature at the State University in Lawrence, Kansas. He stayed there until 1891 when he became Chancellor of the University of Nebraska. He also served as president of the National Education Association. From Nebraska Canfield went on to become President of Ohio State University, and then accepted the position of librarian at Columbia University where he served from 1899-1909. In 1902 he received the degree of Lit. D. at Oxford. Canfield married Flavia Camp of Wisconsin in 1873; and they had two children, James A. ~~(1874-1913)~~ <sup>(1874-1954)</sup> and Dorothy (1879-1958).

Dorothy Canfield (1879-1958) married John Fisher and became a notable author in Vermont. Dorothy was born in Lawrence, Kansas, while her father was a professor at the Kansas State University. She attended public school in Lawrence and went to a girls' boarding school in Paris when she was nine. In 1891 she moved with her family to Lincoln, Nebraska, and then to Columbus, Ohio. She attended Ohio State, graduating in 1899. She then studied in England, France, and Germany. She returned to her family in New York City, began writing, and went to Columbia University to study for her doctorate, which she received in 1904. In 1907 she married John Fisher and moved to Arlington, Vermont, where they both pursued careers as writers. In 1909 their daughter, Sally, was born, and in 1913 a son, James, was born.

### Scope and Content Note

This collection is made up of the papers of the Eli Hawley Canfield family of Arlington, Vermont, 1806-1919 (bulk 1850-1898). The bulk of the collection is correspondence but there are also diary and record books, deeds, postcards, and miscellaneous circulars and printed items.

The correspondence begins in 1842 when Eli Canfield was studying at the Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, and continues through his early years as a minister in Ohio (1847), in New York City at St. Peter's Church (1850-1852), and then through his tenure at Christ Church in Brooklyn (1852-1869). His correspondence is with members of the church and concern many theological debates, particularly over a division between supporters of the "high" and "low" Protestant Episcopal Church. Canfield supported the low church and in the mid-1860's he was in the middle of a controversy caused by allowing a Congregational minister to speak in his church. Several recurring names are Bishop Potter who was in charge of the New York diocese where

Canfield worked, and Bishop Hopkins, the prominent Vermont bishop who was a supporter of the high church. Another regular correspondent on church issues was W. S. Perkins.

Among Canfield's papers are appointments to church related committees and societies, invitations to conventions, and evidence of his social, political, and religious activity. He was involved with several organizations that were interested in providing education for freed slaves and there are several letters in 1867-1868 from Julia Parks about her experience with a school for freed slaves in Abingdon, Virginia.

In 1869 Canfield resigned from Christ Church because of poor health but he remained active in church affairs. His correspondence indicates that he was much in demand for advice and recommendations for ministers, for his influence in raising money for new churches and schools, and for his service as short-term or interim rector at churches that were short-handed. He accepted many such assignments in New York, Vermont, and Pennsylvania. He also traveled extensively, to Europe and in the United States, making several trips to visit his son in Kansas.

Canfield married Martha Hulme in 1846, who died nine years later at which time there are letters of sympathy to Eli. He sent his children to live with his mother in Arlington and there are letters between father and children during that time, and letters about the children. Martha (Mattie) and James did live with their father on and off while attending school and occasionally traveled with him, writing back to family in Arlington. Once James enrolled Williams College he became a regular correspondent with his father. Mattie also corresponded with her father and brother but not as often. In addition to the correspondence there are several diaries of Eli Canfield, ca. 1859-1892.

James started at Williams College in the fall of 1864. His letters to his father tell of his classes, professors, and grades, and social activities such as lectures, debates, and sporting events. They also cover politics and include sermons he had heard. After graduating from college James went west to work on the railroad and then studied law. By 1870 his letters include references to Flavia Camp whom he would marry in 1873. He became a lawyer and ran a loan business and wrote to his father and aunt about investments. His dissatisfaction with the law and a breakdown in 1876 led him to a teaching job at the University of Kansas. He and his family settled in Lawrence and his letters continued about his job, family, and politics. He wrote of traveling to give lectures and to attend conferences of several professional organization, most notably the National Education Association, of which he was an officer.

Flavia Canfield was an artist and James wrote about her endeavors, especially in 1885 when the children were sent to Manchester, Vermont, to stay with their uncle while Flavia studied in New York. There are also several letters expressing James displeasure at his family's attitude toward his wife.

James Canfield was very active in the education field and was moving away from teaching toward administration. Beginning in about 1885 there are many letters describing job offers and potential promotions at the University of Kansas. In 1891 he accepted a position as chancellor of the University of Nebraska, and in 1895 his letters are from Columbus, Ohio, where he served as president of Ohio State University. The letters fall off after 1895 although there are a few papers concerning the settlement of the estates of James' uncles, Zadock and Adoniram Canfield.

The majority of this collection is letters to and from Eli and James Canfield but there are also papers of Eli's brother Zadock, who lived in Arlington, and was involved in the railroad business. He had a fairly regular correspondence with his cousin Thomas H. Canfield, who was active in railroad building in Vermont and through the northwestern United States with the Northern Pacific Railroad. They were second cousins through their mothers' families. (Zadock's mother was Almera Hawley, her father was Zadoc Hawley, and his father was Andrew Hawley. Thomas' s mother was Mary Ann Canfield, her father was Eli Hawley, his father was Andrew Hawley.) During 1861 the letters from T. H. Canfield are about Zadock's part in buying and selling horses for the Vermont cavalry regiment, and about Thomas's role in appointed sutlers or suppliers for the regiment. Not all of T. H. Canfield's letters are business related; he also tells of his family's activity and his personal experiences. He also seeks genealogical information from Zadock, as do other distant relatives. Other topics in Zadock's correspondence are local, state, and national politics. He served as lister for Arlington and there are some tax records (ca. 1850-1870, scattered years) in the collection. There are also diaries kept by Zadock Canfield, ca. 1853-1896. After his death in 1896 there are estate records, compiled by his nephew James, the estate administrator.

Also in this collection are diaries of Anne and George Nye Boardman. Anne was a painter, native to Vermont, and George was a minister. The diaries range in years 1860-1892, and describe activities in Binghamton, Pittsford, and Chicago. Some are more complete than others and some include accounts and miscellaneous notes rather than detailed diary entries.

Miscellaneous items in the collection include postcards and photographs, 1901-1919, church papers accumulated by Eli Canfield, and genealogy.

### **Organization**

The collection is divided into four series: I. Correspondence; II. Images; III. Volumes; IV. Miscellaneous. The correspondence is arranged chronologically, followed by undated letters arranged alphabetically by writer. The images are arranged chronologically, and the volumes are subdivided by writer: Eli Canfield, Zadock Canfield, and the Boardman family, and miscellaneous.

## Related Collections

Material related to the Canfield family at the Vermont Historical Society can be found in the Thomas H. Canfield Papers (Doc 6), miscellaneous Canfield genealogy and Eli Canfield sermon (Mss 18 #97), and miscellaneous Zadock Canfield papers (Ms B C162; Mss 18 #95, #96, #97; Mss 19 #94). The VHS has a microfilm copy of privately owned correspondence between Eli Canfield and his grandson, James (reel #42). Published material by members of the Canfield family can be found in the card catalog under the names Eli Canfield, Flavia A. Canfield, James Hawley Canfield, Martha Crafts Canfield, and Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

Collections of Canfield family papers can also be found at the Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont; the Martha Canfield Memorial Free Library, Arlington, Vermont; and the University of Nebraska Archives.

## Inventory

### I. Correspondence

Doc 412:1	1806-1844
2	1845-1849
3	1850-1851
4	1852-1853
5	1854-1855
6	1856
7	1857 January-September
8	1857 Oct-Dec
9	1858
10	1859
11	1860 January-May
12	1860 June-Dec
13	1861 January-September
14	1861 Oct-Dec
15	1862 January-June
16	1862 July-Dec
17	1863 January-May
18	1863 June-Dec
19	1864 January-May
20	1864 June-September
21	1864 Oct-Dec
22	1865 January-February
23	1865 March-April
24	1865 May-June
25	1865 July-August
26	1865 September-Oct

	27	1865 Nov-Dec
Doc 413:1		1866 January
	2	1866 February-March
	3	1866 April-May
	4	1866 June
	5	1866 July-September
	6	1866 Oct-Dec
	7	1867 January-February
	8	1867 March April
	9	1867 May-July
	10	1867 August-Dec
	11	1868 January-May
	12	1868 June-Dec
	13	1869 January-March
	14	1869 April-May
	15	1869 June-September
	16	1869 Oct.-Dec
	17	1870 January-April
	18	1870 May-Dec
	19	1871 January-April
	20	1871 May-July
	21	1871 August-Dec
	22	1872
	23	1873
	24	1874 January-June
	25	1874 July-Dec
	26	1875 January-April
	27	1875 May-Dec
	28	1876 January-May
	29	1876 June-Dec
	30	1877 January-May
	31	1877 June-Dec
Doc 414:1		1878 January-February
	2	1878 March
	3	1878 April-May
	4	1878 June-July
	5	1878 August-Dec
	6	1879 January-March
	7	1879 April-July
	8	1879 August-Dec
	9	1880 January-April
	10	1880 May-July
	11	1880 August-Dec
	12	1881 January-June
	13	1881 July-Dec

14	1882 January-July
15	1882 August-Dec
16	1883 January-July
17	1883 August-Dec
18	1884 January-April
19	1884 May-July
20	1884 August-Oct
21	1884 Nov-Dec
22	1885 January-March
23	1885 April-August
24	1885 September-Dec
25	1886 January-April
26	1886 May-June
27	1886 August-Dec
28	1887 January-May
29	1887 June-Dec
30	1888 January-April
31	1888 May-August
32	1888 September-Dec
Doc 415:1	1889 January-March
2	1889 April-September
3	1889 Oct.-Dec
4	1890 January-April
5	1890 May-Dec
6	1891
7	1892
8	1893
9	1894
10	1895
11	1896
12	1897 January-June
13	1897 July-Dec
14	1898
15	1901-1919
16	Undated correspondence, A
17	_____, B
18	_____, Canfield, Auntie
19	_____, Canfield, Jeanette
20	_____, Canfield, Arthur
21	_____, Canfield, Dorothy
22	_____, Canfield, Eli Hawley
23	_____, Canfield, James
24	_____, _____
25	_____, _____
26	_____, Canfield, James A.

- 27 \_\_\_\_\_, Canfield, John
- 28 \_\_\_\_\_, Canfield, Mary Ann
- 29 \_\_\_\_\_, Canfield, Martha
- 30 \_\_\_\_\_, Canfield, Thomas H.
- 31 \_\_\_\_\_, Canfield, Zadock
- 32 \_\_\_\_\_, C
- 33 \_\_\_\_\_, D
- 34 \_\_\_\_\_, E
- 35 \_\_\_\_\_, F-G
- 36 \_\_\_\_\_, H
- 37 \_\_\_\_\_, I-J
- 38 \_\_\_\_\_, K-L
- 39 \_\_\_\_\_, M
- 40 \_\_\_\_\_, N-O
- 41 \_\_\_\_\_, Paddock
- 42 \_\_\_\_\_, P
- 43 \_\_\_\_\_, R
- 44 \_\_\_\_\_, S
- 45 \_\_\_\_\_, T
- 46 \_\_\_\_\_, U-W
- 47 \_\_\_\_\_, unidentified

## II. Images

- 48 Postcards and photographs
- 49 Postcards, 1901-1906
- 50 Postcards, 1907-1909
- 51 Postcards, 1910-1911
- 52 Postcards, 1912-1913
- 53 Postcards, 1914-1919

## III. Volumes

- Doc 416:1 Canfield, Eli, Christ Church, Brooklyn, New York, 1857-1905
- 2 Canfield, Eli, Diaries, 1864, 1867, 1876, 1878
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_, 1887, 1889, 1892
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_, n.d., 1859, 1863, 1864
- 7 Canfield, Zadock, n.d.
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_, 1853, 1856, 1857
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_, 1858, 1861
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_, 1875, 1878, 1879
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1885, n.d.
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_, 1891, 1893, 1894
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_, 1895, 1896

- 15 \_\_\_\_\_, Arlington tax records, 1850, 1853, 1855
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 1857, 1858, 1862
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 1870, n.d.
- Doc 417:1 Boardman diaries, 1860, 1864, 1865, 1865
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_, 1870, 1871, 1873, 1874
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_, 1875, 1877, 1881, 1883
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_, 1886, 1887, 1888
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_, 1891, 1892
- 7 Miscellaneous volumes
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. Miscellaneous

- 9 Miscellaneous printed
- 10 Miscellaneous poetry and verse
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_, prayers
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_, church papers
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_, invitations and announcements, etc.
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_, stamps
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_, newspaper clippings
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_, genealogy
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_, undated and unidentified