

Martin Family Papers
1802-1992 (Bulk: 1861-1913)
Doc 418, MSA 148, MSA 899:20-21, and MS Size D

Introduction

The collection consists of correspondence and papers from several different generations of the Lewis and Martin families of Williamstown, Vermont. The bulk focuses on the family of Maria (Lewis) Martin and her husband, Herbert Proctor Martin.

The papers were donated to the Vermont Historical Society by the Martin family in two separate accessions: the first was made by Victoria Olive (Martin) Lemay through Greg Sharrow of the Vermont Folklife Center in 1995; and the second was donated by her niece Rebecca Olive (Martin) Watson in 2023. Some materials from the second accession were laminated prior to their donation. The collection is stored in one record center box, one archival flip-top box, one oversize folder, and seven additional legal size folders, consuming approximately 1.5 linear feet of shelf space.

Biographical Notes

The earliest material in this collection pertains to the family of Jonathan Lewis. The son of Elizabeth Cram (1764-1845) and Isaac Lewis (1766-1824), Jonathan Lewis was born on 2 July 1793 in Roxbury, Vermont, and died on 14 June 1870 in Williamstown, Vermont. He married three times: first on 3 April 1817 to Sally Smith (1797-1833); second to Amanda Wiggin (1800-1852), a widow previously married to Elisha Lamphere, in 1834; and third to Eunice Waldo Davis (1798-1883) in 1854.

One of Jonathan Lewis' children from his marriage to Amanda Wiggin, Maria Sally (Lewis) Martin, is the central figure represented in the collection. A lifelong resident of Williamstown, she was born on 24 July 1845 and died on 16 January 1914. She married Herbert Proctor Martin (1842-1905) on 5 November 1865. Herbert P. Martin's family had settled in Williamstown in the 1790s and owned Cutter Pond, which later became known as Lotus Lake. He and Maria Lewis had a son, Lewis Damon Martin (1868-1948), who was an osteopathic doctor in Barre, Vermont.

Lewis Damon Martin attended Montpelier Seminary (Vermont Methodist Seminary) in Montpelier, Vermont, before temporarily relocating to Kirksville, Missouri, to study at the American School of Osteopathy. He returned to Vermont and opened a medical practice in Barre in 1899, remaining there until his retirement in 1947. He was active in the state osteopathic society throughout his career and also had regular office hours in a number of nearby towns, including Williamstown. In 1893, he married Olive Amelia Farnham (1874-1955). Their children included Victoria Olive (Martin) Lemay (1911-2006) and Horace Proctor Martin (1908-1968), a professor at Norwich University whose daughter, Rebecca Olive "Becky" (Martin) Watson, collected and arranged many of these materials.

Also represented in the collection is Maria (Lewis) Martin's half-brother, Elam Clark Lewis (1826-1916). A frequent correspondent of his sister, he was born in Williamstown on 15 March 1826 and attended Newbury Seminary and Black River Academy. He studied medicine from about 1848-1850 but discontinued his medical studies to become a pharmacist. He relocated to Rutland, Vermont, around 1853 and operated a drug store there for 40 years. He was also a director and vice president of the Rutland County National Bank and a trustee of the Marble Savings Bank. He died at the age of 90 years on 2 January 1916.

Scope and Content

This collection centers on the family of Maria Lewis and her husband, Herbert Proctor Martin. It includes correspondence, account books, diaries, and other family papers from several generations of the Lewis and Martin families of Williamstown, Vermont.

Many of the earliest letters were addressed to either Isaac Lewis (Maria Lewis' grandfather) in Williamstown, Vermont, or to his daughter-in-law, Amanda Wiggin (Maria Lewis' mother), in Chelsea, Vermont. Isaac Lewis' correspondence is primarily from family members, ca. 1807-1820, and also includes a letter from Mary (Cram) Lakin, who wrote as a recent arrival in Salem, Ashtabula County, Ohio, to her brother Jonathan Cram in Williamstown, Vermont, on 23 August 1819. Amanda Wiggin's correspondence predates her marriage to Jonathan Lewis in 1834 and includes many items from Elisa Wiggin, Mary Wiggin, and especially Phebe Wright of Hanover, New Hampshire. There are also miscellaneous papers of Jonathan Lewis (Maria Lewis' father), mainly consisting of land deeds, ca. 1816-1866.

The bulk of the correspondence was written to Maria (Lewis) Martin between about 1886-1913. It includes many letters from her brother, Elam Clark Lewis, who wrote to both his sister and nephew from Rutland, Vermont, especially in the 1890s and early 1900s. There are also letters from her son, Lewis Damon Martin along with his wife, Olive (Farnham) Martin, primarily from the start of his studies at the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville, Missouri, through the opening of his medical practice in Barre, Vermont, and until just prior to his mother's death in 1914. Other documents also pertain to Lewis D. Martin's medical career and studies at the American School of Osteopathy (including a letter of reference from 1899 and a receipt from 1897). Recipes for compounding medications may also relate to Lewis D. Martin, although their identification is more tentative.

There are also letters written to Maria Lewis during the Civil War. Several that were written from a conscript camp in Fair Haven, Connecticut, and closed from "Oscar," may be attributed to Maria Lewis' informally adopted brother, Oscar F. Marston (1840-1902). Marston served in Company D of the 12th Vermont Volunteers and later re-enlisted with the 2nd Vermont Battery Light Artillery. Other relatives who served in Company D of the 12th Vermont Volunteers are also represented, including Charles F.

Cabot (1839-1864) through a few letters and John Farnham (1840-1902) through a discharge certificate, dated 14 July 1863.

There are diaries of Maria (Lewis) Martin and other family members (including many from unidentified authors) spanning from about 1866, 1873-1879, 1890-1894, 1898, and 1901-1911. Herbert P. Martin's account books from 1875, 1889, and 1898 are also included with an additional twenty volumes from 1897-1910 with no definite identification of who kept them. One was distributed by the Vermont Chemical Fertilizer Company of Vergennes, Vermont, and advertised Hall's Coral Fertilizer. It includes testimonials from customers and an explanation of coral formation.

Other items include papers relating to the estate of A.M. Farnham, two tintypes (of Jonathan Lewis and an unidentified young man with a large high wheeler bicycle), and the transcription of an oral history interview conducted by Greg Sharrow of the Vermont Folklife Center with Victoria Olive (Martin) Lemay in 1992. There are also grade reports of Lewis D. Martin from his attendance at Vermont Methodist Seminary (Montpelier Seminary) in 1884-1885 and 1887.

The family's involvement with the Williamstown Methodist Church is documented through various ephemera, ca. 1890-1911. Other ephemera includes an undated brochure for "Lotus Lake Farm and Cabins" and several Old Home Week programs featuring Horace Proctor Martin as a pianist in 1927, 1949, and 1950. Lastly, an oversize proclamation from Vermont Governor Horace F. Graham in 1917 relates to recruitment and enlistment for military service in World War I.

Organization of Papers

The papers are organized into five series: I. Correspondence; II. Family Papers; III. Other; IV. Accounts and Account Books; and V. Diaries.

Related Collections

There is a photograph (1954) of members of the Martin family in *The History of Williamstown, Vermont, 1791-1991*, published by the Williamstown Historical Society (VHS call no. 974.31 W676h). Many family members remain in the Central Vermont area.

Inventory

I. Correspondence

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| MSA 899:20.1 | Letters, to Isaac Lewis, 1807-1820 |
| :20.2 | _____, to Amanda Wiggin, 1802-1832 |
| MS Size D | _____, to Jonathan Cram, 1819 |
| Doc 418:1 | _____, to Lewis D. Martin, mostly from Elam Lewis, 1884-1904 |
| 2 | _____, _____, from A. M. Smith (Alstead, NH), 1923 |

- 3 _____, to Maria (Lewis) and H.P. Martin from Lewis D. Martin, 1899-1911
- 4 _____, to Maria (Lewis) Martin from Elam Lewis, 1896-1913
- MSA 899:20.4 _____, _____, during the Civil War, 1861-1865
- Doc 418:5 _____, _____, from Lewis and Olive Martin, 1897-1907
- 6 _____, _____, from Faith Kinsman (Winterset, Iowa), 1908-1911
- 7 _____, _____, from various relatives, 1886-1913
- 8 _____, _____, from friends, 1900-1907 and undated
- 9 _____, _____, from friends, 1894-1912 and undated
- 10 _____, of H.P. Martin, about business and real estate, 1893-1905
- 11 _____, _____, 1891-1907 and undated
- MSA 899:20.3 _____, of H.P. and Lewis D. Martin, 1882-1899

II. Family Papers

- Doc 418:12 Estate of A.M. Farnham, 1899-1903 and undated
- 13 Papers of Jonathan Lewis, 1816-1866
- 14 Papers of Lewis D. Martin, grade reports, 1884-1887
- 15 _____, miscellaneous, 1884-1909
- MSA 899:21.2 Papers of Victoria Olive (Martin) Lemay, 1969-1992

III. Other

- MSA 899:21.1 Clippings and ephemera, 1888-1953
 - Includes: Old Home Week programs, 1927, 1949-1950
- 21.3 Photographs, undated
- Doc 418:16 Medical recipes, undated
- 17 Williamstown Methodist Church, 1890-1911
 - Includes: Membership roll for 1895 and various ephemera
- 18 Birthday party invitation, card, 1902
- 19 Vermont ephemera, 1897-1901
- 20-21 Miscellany, 1807-1912
- 22 Northfield schools, 1903
- MS Size D World War I proclamation of Governor Horace F. Graham, 1917

IV. Accounts and Account Books

- Doc 418:23 Accounts, 1883-1897 and undated
- 24 Account books, 1887-1906
- 25 Account books, 1876-1884 and undated
- 26 Account books, H.P. Martin, 1891; Account Book, 1889

V. Diaries

- MSA 148:1 Diaries, author unknown, 1901-1904
- 2 Diaries, 1890-1894 (three of Charles Reynolds)
- 3 Diaries, 1909, 1911, author unknown
- 4 Diary, H.P. Martin, n.d., 1898, 1902 (2), 1906
- 5 Diaries, 1873-1878, author unknown

6 Diaries, Martin, 1866, 1879, 1890, 1907

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martinfamily.docx