

The Robert Cleaves Collection of Lyman School Records

Finding Aid

Last Revised: 11/19/2020

Collection Summary

Collection number: LH.070
Collection title: The Robert Cleaves Collection of Lyman School Records
Dates: 1847-1946
Size: 1 linear foot (2 boxes + Map Case folder)
Creator/Collector: Robert Cleaves
Acquisitions info: The collection was donated to the Westborough Public Library by Charles and Sandra Cleaves (2019.03)
Language(s): English
Repository: The Westborough Public Library
Processed by: Anthony T. Vaver, 2020

Rights and Access

Access: Collection is open for research

Copyright: No known copyright restrictions. No known restrictions on use.

Publishing Permission: As a courtesy, please consult with the Westborough Public Library Local History Librarian.

Institutional History

Established in 1848, The State Reform School for Boys was the first of its kind in the United States. The Massachusetts State Legislature selected Westborough for this new experiment—which sought to reform and educate juvenile offenders as opposed to punishing them—due to its central location and agricultural setting. The reform school originally housed 300 boys along the banks of Lake Chauncy and in 1852 an addition was added to accommodate 300 more. The goal of the school was to train the boys in trade professions so that they could pursue meaningful employment upon leaving.

In 1880, the Massachusetts Legislature concluded that the congregate style of housing boys was a failure. It decided to repurpose the property and establish the Westborough Insane Hospital, and it moved the reform school to another location in Westborough a couple miles away along what is now Oak Street. The school was renamed The Lyman School for Boys in 1884, and it instituted a “cottage system” where groups of boys lived together under smaller, separate roofs in order to create a more “family” type setting.

The Lyman School operated until 1971, when it was closed down by the state.

Scope and Content Note

The Robert Cleaves Collection of Lyman School Records provides great insight into the early years of the State Reform School for Boys and the Lyman School. Most notably, the collection includes meeting minutes of the school's Board of Trustees beginning with its very first meeting in 1847 up until 1860. The rest of the collection focuses on operations of the school in the early twentieth century and includes annual reports and school and student publications printed by the boys as part of their training. The collection of photographs show the boys engaged in a number of activities and roughly date between 1905 and 1912.

Related Collections

- Records of the Lyman School for Boys (LH.016)
- Local History By Subject Collection (LH.001, "Lyman School" folder)
- The Fay Photograph Collection (LH.028)
- Kristina Allen Papers (LH.032)

Series Summary

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| Series 1 | Administrative Records |
| Series 2 | Lyman School Publications |
| Series 3 | Student Publications |
| Series 4 | Anniversary Programs |
| Series 5 | Photographs |
| Series 6 | Miscellaneous |

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Administrative Records

Box 1

Folder

- 1.01 State Reform School, Records of the Trustees, 1847-1860
- 1.02 Annual Report of the Trustees of the Lyman and Industrial Schools, 1899
- 1.03 Annual Report of the Trustees of the Lyman and Industrial Schools, 1906
- 1.04 Annual Report of the Trustees of the Lyman and Industrial Schools, 1907
- 1.05 Annual Report of the Trustees of the Lyman and Industrial Schools, 1908, 1909
- 1.06 Annual Report of the Trustees of Massachusetts Training Schools, 1915
- 1.07 Annual Reports of the Instructors, 1906, 1907, 1912
- 1.08 General Order Book, 1911-1929

Box 2

Folder

- 2.01 General Order Book, 1910-1922

Series 2: Lyman School Publications

Box 2

Folder

- 2.02 Creating Character at the Lyman School for Boys, 1903
- 2.03 Course of Studies for the Lyman School for Boys, 1904
- 2.04 Investigation of the Suicide of John Newman, 1910
- 2.05 The Activities of Delinquent Boys, 1913

Series 3: Student Publications

Box 2

Folder

- 2.06 The Lyman School Boys Budget, July 1914
- 2.07 The Boys' Budget, July 1916 and Sept. 1916

Map Case

- Drawer 4 Lyman School Enterprise, 1897, 1920

Box 2

Folder

- 2.08 The Enterprise, 1928

Series 4: Anniversary Programs

Box 2

Folder

- 2.09 Anniversary Exercises, 1909
- 2.10 100th Anniversary Program, 1946
- 2.11 100 Years of Progress in the Making of Men, [1946]

Series 5: Photographs

Box 2

Folder

- 2.12 Photographs, 4" x 6" (31), early 1900's
- 2.13 Photographs, 8" x 10" – Boys at Work (26), ca. 1905-1912
- 2.14 Photographs, 8" x 10" – Boys at Play (10), ca. 1905-1912
- 2.15 Photographs, 8" x 10" – Buildings and Grounds (10), ca. 1905-1912
- 2.16 Photographs, 8" x 10" – Interiors (14), ca. 1905-1912
- 2.17 Photographs, 8" x 10" – Exhibitions (5), ca. 1905-1912
- 2.18 Photographs, 2" x 3" (13), early 1900's
- 2.19 Postcards (3), ca. 1900, 1913

Series 5: Miscellaneous

Box 2

Folder

- 2.20 Miscellaneous – News Clippings, 1907, [1971]
- 2.21 Miscellaneous – Attorney General Letter, 1914
- 2.22 Original Collection Inventory and Donor Correspondence, 2019