

Finding aid for the Charles W. Garfield papers Collection 394

Finding aid prepared by Melissa Fox

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
February 2013
111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49503
616-988-5400
localhis@grpl.org

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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title	Charles W. Garfield papers
Date [inclusive]	1896-1939
Extent	2.0 Linear feet Five boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Charles W. Garfield papers were donated to the Grand Rapids Public Library History and Special Collections department by Elinor P. White, a relative of Charles Garfield. The collection consists of several portraits and photographs of the Garfield family, including a scrapbook of photographs of the family farm and a small album of personal photographs. The collection also includes a few personal papers and a memory book from an event held in honor of Charles Garfield at the Pantlind Hotel in December of 1924. This collection provides a photographic introduction to some of the members of the Garfield family, and illustrates Garfield's interest in horticulture as well as how beloved he was by the local community.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

Charles W. Garfield was born in Wisconsin on March 14, 1848. When he was ten years old, he moved with his family to Grand Rapids, settling on the Burton farm. He attended local schools and worked on his family's farm. As a high school boy, he was one of the founders of what is now the Grand Rapids Public Museum. In 1868 he entered the State Agricultural College and graduated in 1870, after which he became a horticulturist and Secretary of the Horticultural Society in 1876.

As a young member of the State House of Representatives, Garfield pioneered the good roads, forest reserve and reforestation, and county school movements. In his later years he was integral to the movements of city beautiful, parks, and playgrounds and boulevards, and for the commission form of government.

In 1892 Garfield planted a 6 acre portion of the Burton farm with 10 varieties of trees, which he gave to the Grand Rapids Park and Boulevard Association as a "forestry park" in 1914. This land was deeded to the city of Grand Rapids in 1921 to remain forever as a forest preserve, known as Burton Woods. Garfield and his cousins donated the land for Garfield Park in 1906, and upon his death in 1934, his remains were buried there under a large tree.

Garfield was referred to as the "Grand Old Man" of Grand Rapids and was described as "Grand Rapids' most useful citizen." He was respected and revered by many as a philanthropist, public servant, nature lover, horticulturalist, banker, and for his work and activities in helping to shape Grand Rapids.

Scope and Contents note

This collection primarily consists of portraits and photographs of the Garfield family and their property. Also included are a few personal papers, a scrapbook, a memory book, and a small album of family photographs.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department February 2013

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Elinor P. White, accession number 2010.002.

Controlled Access Headings

Family Name(s)

- Garfield

Genre(s)

- family papers
- photographs

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Garfield, Charles William, 1848-1934

Collection Inventory

	Box	
Small Album with family photographs	1	
Round portrait	1	
“In Appreciation” Charles W. Garfield	2	
“Views at Burton Farm” scrapbook	3	
	Box	Folder
Charles Garfield, wife Jesse, old car. Photograph by Fedora E.D. Brown	4	1
Charles Garfield, wife Jesse, interior. Photograph by Fedora E.D. Brown	4	1
Two Oval portraits of Deborah Garfield, 1901 M.A.C (Michigan Ag. Coll.)	4	2
Oval portrait of Amelia Brown	4	2
Portrait of Charles Garfield and daughter Deborah Garfield April 1896	4	2
Small oval photograph, woman putting on gloves, back “Gram D”, Deborah Garfield Decker	4	3

Unidentified woman with pearl necklace	4	3
Seven men standing in front of a car, identified as “Hood, Cutcheon, Sperry, Decker, Garfield, Roth, Rich”	4	3
Portrait of Jesse Garfield	4	3
Photograph of Jesse Garfield	4	3
Unidentified photograph, back “Aunt Cadi”	4	3
Portrait of Charles Garfield (2)	4	4
Portrait of Anne Robertson Smith	4	5
Portrait of unidentified man	4	5
Photograph of a farm house	4	5
Photograph of Charles Garfield	4	5
Photograph of Filibert Roth	4	5
Paper with biographical information about Filibert Roth	4	5
Itemized list “Received from the safe deposit box of Jesse S. Garfield...” May 3, 1939	4	6

Papers "Some suggestions to aid any one taking charge of funeral services
for Jessie S. Garfield"

4

7

Box

Framed family portrait

5