

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Nason, Elias, Papers, 1830-1911

LOCATION:

Mss. boxes "N"
Octavo volumes "N"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

3 manuscript boxes; 5 octavo boxes

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For a biographical sketch of Nason, see the *DAB*, v. 13, p. 389-390.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gifts of Charles E. Goodspeed, 1922; and the Reverend Frederick C. Wilson, 1981

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

Elias Nason (1811-1887) was at various times in his life an editor, writer, teacher, public lecturer, and Congregational minister. He graduated from Brown University in 1835. Nason wrote many books and pamphlets on topics of New England history and biography.

This collection contains correspondence consisting primarily of letters of Nason with some letters and drafts of letters written by him. Most of the letters fall in the periods 1831 to 1840 and 1849 to 1858. Broadsides, circulars, printed announcements, and programs have been transferred to the Graphic Arts Department (see accompanying list). Many of the broadsides and circulars are from temperance, antislavery, and church organizations. Some of the letters are in shorthand.

The letters reflect the varied aspects of Nason's career. The earliest are from family members and his fiancée, Mira Anne Bigelow (-). As a young person, Nason was very poor and there is information on his struggle to secure enough money to attend Brown. From 1836 to 1840, he lived in Georgia where he worked at various trades to support himself. In 1840, he returned to Massachusetts and taught in schools in Newburyport and Milford. In 1852, he was ordained and called to pastorate in Natick, Mass. There are letters from fellow students at Brown (including Henry Chapin (-) of Worcester, Mass.), pupils he taught, parishioners, clergymen, and people active in the American Sunday School Union. There are also letters from family members, including his young sons, and his brother, Edward Shepard Nason (1820-), music teacher and owner of a music store in Worcester. Nason had a large repertory of lectures and some of the correspondence concerns lyceum engagements. There are also letters written by Elias Nason to members of his family during his travels in England, France and Italy, 1874 to 1875.

The collection includes some of Nason's lectures and essays, mostly undated, as well as poetry, news clippings, tributes to the Nasons' fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1886, several memorials written upon Elias Nason's death in 1887, and various miscellaneous family materials.

(cont.)

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COLLECTION DESCRIPTION (cont.):

The octavo volumes consist of Nason's detailed European travel journal, 1874-1875 (with sketches and photographs of his son, Charles, and the latter's wife); three diaries, 1830-1863, 1864-1886, and 1886-1887; and Nason's copy of Ben Pitman's The Phonographic Reader (Cincinnati, 1864), a method of shorthand. The last two diaries were written primarily in shorthand. Nason's diaries were begun when he was nineteen and contain details of his courtship of Mira Bigelow, his social life, early teaching career and lectures, temperance activities, his experience in Georgia and his various pastorates in Massachusetts and difficulties with some parishioners, his attitude towards slavery and commentaries on the Civil War and politics. The second diary mentions his trips to Washington, D.C., during the war. The earliest journal contains genealogical notes and all three contain news clippings that were pasted in the volumes.

See Contents List.

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Manuscript Collections

Elias Nason, Papers, 1830-1911

Contents List

Manuscript Box

1 Correspondence, n.d.; 1831-1850

Folder 1 n.d.
Folder 2 1831 - 1832 July
Folder 3 1832 August - December
Folder 4 1833 January - June
Folder 5 1833 July - October
Folder 6 1833 December
Folder 7 1834 January - June
Folder 8 1834 July - August
Folder 9 1834 September - December
Folder 10 1835 February - March
Folder 11 1835 April
Folder 12 1835 May - June
Folder 13 1835 July
Folder 14 1835 August
Folder 15 1835 September
Folder 16 1835 October
Folder 17 1835 November - December
Folder 18 1836
Folder 19 1837 - 1839
Folder 20 1840 January - June
Folder 21 1840 July - August
Folder 22 1840 September - December
Folder 23 1845; 1849 January - July
Folder 24 1849 August - October 13
Folder 25 1849 October 14 - November
Folder 26 1849 December
Folder 27 1850 January - February
Folder 28 1850 March
Folder 29 1850 April - May
Folder 30 1850 June - August
Folder 31 1850 September - November 4
Folder 32 1850 November 1 - 8
Folder 33 1850 November 9
Folder 34 1850 November 10 - 21
Folder 35 1850 December

2 Correspondence, 1851-1855 July

Folder 1 1851 January - August
Folder 2 1851 September - December
Folder 3 1852 January - April 24
Folder 4 1852 April 26 - December
Folder 5 1853 January
Folder 6 1853 February
Folder 7 1853 March
Folder 8 1853 April
Folder 9 1853 May
Folder 10 1853 June
Folder 11 1853 July
Folder 12 1853 August - September 10
Folder 13 1853 September 12 - 30
Folder 14 1853 October
Folder 15 1853 November
Folder 16 1853 December
Folder 17 1854 January
Folder 18 1854 February
Folder 19 1854 March

(cont.)

2 Correspondence, 1851-1855 July (cont.)

Folder 20 1854 April - May
 Folder 21 1854 June
 Folder 22 1854 July
 Folder 23 1854 August
 Folder 24 1854 September - October 9
 Folder 25 1854 October 10 - 27
 Folder 26 1854 November 1 - 10
 Folder 27 1854 November 22 - December
 Folder 28 1855 January 1 - 17
 Folder 29 1855 January 20 - 30
 Folder 30 1855 February 1 - 10
 Folder 31 1855 February 14 - 27
 Folder 32 1855 March
 Folder 33 1855 April
 Folder 34 1855 May
 Folder 35 1855 June
 Folder 36 1855 July 1 - 21
 Folder 37 1855 July 24 - 30

3 Correspondence, 1855 August-1884; Miscellaneous Papers, n.d.; 1855-1957

Folder 1 1855 August
 Folder 2 1855 September
 Folder 3 1855 October
 Folder 4 1855 November 1 - 23
 Folder 5 1855 November 24 - December
 Folder 6 1856 January - February
 Folder 7 1856 March 5 -21
 Folder 8 1856 March 24 - 29
 Folder 9 1856 April 1 - 16
 Folder 10 1856 April 17 - 25
 Folder 11 1856 May
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 Folder 17 1856 November 11 - 28
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 Folder 20 1857 January
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 Folder 25 1857 July 1 - 17
 Folder 26 1857 July 20 - 31
 Folder 27 1857 August - September
 Folder 28 1857 October
 Folder 29 1857 November
 Folder 30 1857 December
 Folder 31 1858
 Folder 32 1859 - 1884
 Folder 33 Travel Letters and Miscellaneous Papers, 1861 - 1911
 Folder 34 Newsclippings, etc., n.d.; 1855 - 1957
 Folder 35 Lectures, Essays, etc., (mostly) n.d.
 Folder 36 Lectures, Essays, etc., (mostly) n.d.

(cont.)

Octavo Volume

- 1 Travel Journal, European tour, 1874-1875
- 2 Diary of Elias Nason, 1830-1863
- 3 Diary of Elias Nason, 1864-1886 (written mostly in shorthand)
- 4 Diary of Elias Nason, 1886-1887 (written mostly in shorthand)
- 5 Pitman, Ben, The Phonographic Reader (Cincinnati, Ohio: Photographic
Institute, [1864])
--the volume Nason used for shorthand