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Abstract

Winifred Hackley Durfee was a graduate of Union Academy class of 1879. She served as the Hope College Dean of Women from 1909-1936. The collection of papers relates to the life, work and correspondence of Durfee. The collection covers Durfee’s correspondence with multiple family members and associates, photographs of Durfee at various ages, the Yale University diploma of a family member, a biography of the subject written by Kristen E. Blank (Hope College class of 1963), and newspaper and magazine clippings of Durfee’s obituary and other posthumous articles of recognition.

Accession No: H88-0045
Provenance: Winifred Hackley Durfee
Donor: Winifred Hackley Durfee
Photographs: 5 images
Processed by: Geoffrey Reynolds, December 2016

Biography

Winifred Hackley Durfee was born in Belleville, New York, on April 12, 1861, to Mills A. and Sarah Stacey Hackley. She did not attend public school until the age of 12 due to ill health, with her early education being administered at home and in “dame” schools. She graduated from Union Academy in Belleville in 1879 and went on Oberlin College, entering as a sophomore due to her “high standard of work.” She would go on to study at Northwestern University and the University of Wisconsin, where she would receive her master’s degree. She then taught in Henderson, North Carolina, and Williamsburg, Kentucky, and Phelps, New York, before marrying Abner M. Durfee, Jr., also a member of Union Academy class of 1879, on September 21, 1892. Abner M. Durfee passed away in 1901, after just 9 years of marriage to Winifred. The couple had no children, and she did not remarry. Winifred taught at Union Academy from 1898-1903 before moving on to Glens Falls Academy, Keuka College, and Heading College. She began as dean of women at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, on September 11, 1909. She would remain in this position for 27 years, also serving as head of the French and drama departments at Hope.

Winifred Durfee retired from Hope College in 1936. After her retirement, she returned to Belleville, New York, and took up residence in the house her father built and in which she had been born. A niece, Florence L. Kennedy, also lived with her during this time. Following an illness in 1946, Winifred’s health declined sharply until she died at home on October 24, 1950, at the age of 89. Her death was said to be caused by “the infirmities of old age.”

Scope and Content

The collection consists of papers belonging to and regarding Winifred Hackley Durfee. These include correspondence written to and from Durfee, photographs of Durfee at various
ages, the Yale University diploma of a family member, a biography of the subject written by Kristen E. Blank (Hope College Class of 1963), and newspaper and magazine clippings of Durfee’s obituary and other posthumous articles of recognition.

Container List

Biographical, 1924-1950
Correspondence
  Blank, Kristen, and Florence Kennedy, 1963
  Durfee, Winifred Hackley, 1906-1947
Diploma from Yale University for Levi Hackley, September 1796
Photographs, n.d. (5 images)