

Guide to the Nourse Family Papers

MS 1390



compiled by Diane Ellen Kaplan

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1390

CREATOR: Nourse family

TITLE: Nourse family papers

DATES: 1775-1910

BULK DATES: 1784-1853

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of a scrapbook begun by James Nourse in 1850, entitled "Family Memorials." Included are genealogical charts, notes on family history, family correspondence, portraits, certificates, and clippings concerning his ancestors and extended family. The materials primarily document Nourse family history and James Nourse's abolitionist views.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Nourse Family Papers (MS 1390). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

James Nourse (1805-1854)

James Nourse, son of Michael and Mary Rittenhouse Nourse of Washington, D.C., was born on April 30, 1805. He came from a large and well known family; an uncle Joseph Nourse (1784-1841) served as first registrar of the United States Treasury and a brother, Benjamin Franklin Nourse (1807-1834) was a surgeon, who died serving in the Indian wars in Key West, Florida.

Nourse grew up in Washington, D.C. and graduated from the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton in 1827. He was ordained and for many years served a church in Valey, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, before returning to the Central Academy in Washington, D.C. Initially a supporter of the American Colonization Society, like other members of his family, he eventually broke with the society and became a vocal abolitionist. James Nourse married Sarah Harvey Nourse, and they had eight children who survived their father. Nourse died in 1854 on a visit to southern Iowa.

Scope and Contents

A scrapbook, begun by James Nourse in 1853 and entitled "Family Memorials," comprises the Nourse Family Papers. The volume, the gift of Mrs. Joseph L. Ruegg in 1984, had been previously taken apart. Its contents, including genealogical charts, notes on family history, family correspondence, portraits, certificates, and clippings concerning Nourse's ancestors and extended family, are arranged in folders which for the most part follow the order of the scrapbook, since Nourse attempted to keep items by or about individual family members together. The papers date from 1775, but the bulk of the items dates from 1784-1853. The inclusion of materials up to 1910 indicates that the scrapbook was maintained well after James Nourse's death.

The papers primarily document Nourse family history. Correspondence is not continuous; rather, selected letters were included which announce births of children, marriages, new addresses and careers or which detail deathbed scenes. Folders 9 and 11 describe the death in Key West, Florida, of Benjamin Franklin Nourse while serving as a naval surgeon during the Indian wars. Many of the eighteenth century letters discuss expansion of the family's holdings through land purchases in Virginia and Kentucky. Most of the later letters are written to James Nourse or his wife. Of particular note are several letters (folders 5, 8, 11, and 14) concerning James Nourse's abolitionist sentiments and the tension they created in the family.

Related Nourse Family papers are held by the University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1	Family Genealogical charts, notes A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1850, 1853
b. 1, f. 2	James Nourse (1732-1784) A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1775
b. 1, f. 3	Joseph Nourse (1754-1841)	1784
b. 1, f. 3	James Nourse (1758-1799)	1784
b. 1, f. 4	William Nourse (1763-1836)	1808
b. 1, f. 4	Eliza (Nourse) Chapline	1796, 1845
b. 1, f. 4	Robert Nourse (1762-1836)	1784
b. 1, f. 4	Gabriel Nourse (1770-1836)	1784
b. 1, f. 4	William Riddle	1796
b. 1, f. 5	D.H. Riddle A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1838-50
b. 1, f. 6	E. Hughes	1784
b. 1, f. 6	B. Bull	undated
b. 1, f. 6	R. Boyd	undated
b. 1, f. 7	Michael and Mary (Rittenhouse) Nourse A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1835-47
b. 1, f. 8	John Nourse A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1838
b. 1, f. 9	Benjamin Franklin Nourse A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1836, undated
b. 1, f. 10	Mary Nourse	1835
b. 1, f. 10	William Nourse	1835-48

b. 1, f. 11	Sarah Nourse	1838
b. 1, f. 11	Anna (Nourse) Hassler	1835, 1837
b. 1, f. 11	Joseph L. Nourse	1836-49
b. 1, f. 11	Charles Nourse	1844-83
b. 1, f. 11	Henry Nourse	1848
b. 1, f. 11	Sam Harvey	1840
b. 1, f. 12	Diplomas, certificates of James Nourse A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1827-48
b. 1, f. 13	Amos Nourse A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1870
b. 1, f. 14	James Nourse to Rev. D. Laurie A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1835
b. 1, f. 15	James Nourse to Sarah (Harvey) Nourse A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1838
b. 1, f. 16	Clippings, miscellaneous letters, pictures A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy.	1840-1910
b. 1, f. 17	Margaret (Nourse) Patterson	1853, 1861, undated
b. 1, f. 17	Anna (Nourse) Hassler	1861

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Abolitionists
Clergy
Families

Geographic Names

Middle Atlantic States
Mifflin County (Pa.) -- Religious and
ecclesiastical institutions

Names

Nourse, James, 1805-1854

Corporate Body

Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A -- Clergy

Families

Nourse family