

Founding Papers
701.02.01

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SUMMARY INFORMATION

Repository

George T. Henry College Archives

Title

Founding Papers

ID

701.02.01

Date

1850's-1900's

Extent

0.66 Linear feet

Language

English

Abstract

From 1851 to 1881 Coe College went through three incorporations and a name change, beginning as Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute its name was changed to Parsons' Seminary in 1866 in a bid for the Parson's Gift. After hard times which saw the closing of the school it was opened again in 1875 as Coe Collegiate Institute which successfully ran for six years before the school became a college in 1881. The Founding Papers include documents from these early years, including: deeds, correspondence, by-laws, and founder's papers.

Preferred Citation Note

Founding Papers, Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), George T. Henry College Archives, Stewart Memorial Library, Coe College.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The institution's first official title was Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute (1853-1866), before this it was known informally as Williston Jones' School of the Prophets or 'Little Muddy' after the building it was housed in. Williston Jones was the minister of the First Presbyterian church in Cedar Rapids from 1849-1856. Jones convinced a young man, George Carroll, to become a minister for the churches in the West. To prepare him for seminary Jones took Carroll into his house for lessons. Word spread and soon a dozen more students who wished to learn approached Jones. He took them in and over the next two years Jones ran an informal school out of his home and church with the help of his wife and David Blakely, a recent graduate from Knox College.

In 1853, during a trip to New York for the Presbyterian Assembly, Jones met Daniel Coe. Jones was requesting funds from the New York congregations in order to send his students to seminary when Coe stepped forward and offered \$1500 if Jones would start his own school in Cedar Rapids. With this gift the Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute was created and ran until 1859 when it closed due to financial conflicts.

In 1866 the hope for a school in Cedar Rapids was revived with the possibility of claiming the legacy of Lewi Baldwin Parsons, a business man from Michigan who was interested in building a college in Iowa. The school was re-opened under the name Parson's seminary, a new building was constructed and classes began again in 1867. In 1870 the Parsons Gift went to Parsons College in Fairfield Iowa, enrollment at Parsons Seminary dwindled, and funding disappeared causing the seminary to close again in 1871.

In 1875, under the threat of losing Daniel Coe's gift and any hopes of a co-educational institution in Cedar Rapids, the school board requested help from the Cedar Rapids Presbyterian Synod, who took over the school. That first year 40 students enrolled in classes, the next year enrollment quadrupled to 160 students, and three years later, in 1879, the school saw its first class graduate.

Despite these success, and continuing enrollment, the college was still facing financial troubles, and was competing with a strengthening public school system

for students. Help came in the form of a local entrepreneur by the name of Thomas M. Sinclair who headed the schools finance committee and succeeded in liquidating Coe Collegiate Institute's debts. In 1881 the Coe Collegiate Institute became Coe College when it was incorporated under the Presbyterian Synod of Iowa.

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Publication Information

George T. Henry College Archives
Coe College
1220 First Avenue NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 52402

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CONTROLLED ACCESS HEADINGS

Corporate Name(s)

- Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute.
- Cedar Rapids Improvement Company, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa).
- Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa).
- Coe Collegiate Institute (Cedar Rapids, Iowa).
- First National Bank of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
- Moultrie County Abstract Company.
- Parsons Seminary (Cedar Rapids, Iowa).
- Simmons & Pope.
- W.B. Leach & Company (Cedar Rapids, Iowa).

Geographic Name(s)

- Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Iowa
- Linn County (Iowa)
- Maryland
- McMinn County (Tenn.)
- Moultrie County (Ill.)
- Scott County (Iowa)

Personal Name(s)

- Albree, Joseph, Esq.

- Beechley, N. K.
- Beuer, Sampson C.
- Bingham , Charles W.
- Blakely, David
- Boyd, W. R.
- Brocksmit, John C.
- Burkhalter, Edward Read, Rev.
- Carpenter, S. D.
- Carroll, George R.
- Coe, Daniel, 1794-1892
- Condit, Robert Aaron
- Cook, Isaac
- Crawford, George E.
- Dows, Stephen, L.
- Drury, M. R. , Rev.
- Ely, John F., Dr.
- Ely, John S.
- Eriksson, Erik McKinley
- Federick , Murray G. , Dr.
- Gage, Harry Morehouse, Dr., Coe College President, 1878-1961
- Green, Thomas E.
- Greene, Calvin
- Greene, George, 1817-1880
- Greene, William
- Hamielz, Addison
- Hickok, Ralph K.
- Jewell, James Ralph
- Jewell, Mary
- Jones, Williston , Rev, 1814-1865
- Jones, Williston, Mrs.
- Knox, James
- Marquis, John A.
- Moss, Lemuel
- Phifer, James R, Coe College President
- Shearer, Elizabeth
- Shearer, John L.
- Sherwood, Henry M.
- Stuart, George

Subject(s)

- Coe College Addition to Cedar Rapids
- Coe College Articles of Incorporation
- Coe College Auxiliary
- Coe Family--genealogy
- Deeds--Coe College
- Greene and College Addition to Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Iowa--History--19th Century
- Linn County Abstract Office
- Maternal Association (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
- Sinclair Family
- United States Christian Commission

- [United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865](#)

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COLLECTION INVENTORY

Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute

Articles of Incorporation 1853 (box 1, folder 1)

(see also: Board of Trustees)

(see also: Founding Papers- Deeds)

(see also: Founding Papers - Founders)

(see also: Histories - Eriksson)

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Parson's Seminary

Correspondence, Note Transferring Coe gift to Parsons, other historical documents 1867-1972 (box 1, folder 2)

Subscription Book 1870 (box 2, folder 3)

(see also: Board of Trustees)

(see also: Founding Papers - Deeds)

(see also: Founding Papers - Founders)

(see also: Histories - Eriksson)

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Coe Collegiate Institute

Articles of Incorporation 1875 (box 1, folder 4)

(see also: Board of Trustees)

(see also: Faculty/Staff - Condit, Robert Aaron)

(see also: Founding Papers - Deeds)

(see also: Founding Papers - Founders)

(see also: Histories - Eriksson)

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Coe College Founding - Articles of Incorporation

1881 (box 1, folder 5)

1893 (box 1, folder 6)

1898 (box 1, folder 7)

(see also: Board of Trustees)

(see also: Founding Papers - Deeds)

(see also: Founding Papers - Founders)

(see also: Histories - Eriksson)

(see also: Presidents - Phelps, Stephen)

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Deeds

Land Plats of Cedar Rapids 1843-
1849 (oversized zzw701)

Abstract of Title beginning 234 1/2ft. W of the NE

conder of the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of section 11
t. 13 N R 5 E of the 3rd P.M. Running thence W
418ft. thence S 245ft., thence E 418ft., thence N
245ft. to place of beginning. Moultrie
County, Illinois. 1847-1910 (box 1, folder 8)

Deed to Williston Jones from John F.
Ely 1850 (oversized zzw 701)

W end of the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/2 of the NW
fractional 1/4 of Sections No. (5) five in Tsp. (83)
Eighty Three North of Range (5) five W of the 5th
principal meridian Commencing at the NW corner
of said 40 and Running 20 Rods E thence S 80
Rods, thence W 20 Rods, thence N 80 Rods to the
place of beginning embracing 10
acres. 1853 (box 1, folder 9)

South 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Section 22 Tsp. 88,
Range 46 1871 (oversized zzw701)

Lot 6, Block 15 1876 (oversized zzw701)

West 1/2 of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 22 of
Tsp. 83 1880 (box 1, folder 10)

W 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 22. Tsp. 83, South of
Range 7. West of the 5th P.M. of the Coe College
Addition to Cedar Rapids, Iowa 1882 (oversized
zzw701)

Lot 14, Block 8, Greene & College Addition Cedar
Rapids, Iowa 1883 (box 1, folder 11)

Abstract of Title to the front 140 ft lots 1-2-3,
Block 19 Greene and College Additions to Cedar
Rapids, Iowa 1896 (oversized zzw701)

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Founders

Coe, Daniel [first financial donor]

Biography, by Daniel Coe's Grandson James
Jewel (box 2, folder 1)

Correspondence 1870 (box 2, folder 4)

Family Genealogy - correspondence,
research 1927-2011 (box 2, folder 3)

Newspaper Clippings circa 1939 (box 2,
folder 4)

(see also: Alumni - Jewel, James Ralph
[Daniel Coe's grandson])

(see also: Photographs - Founders)

Jones, Williston [founder]

Newspaper Clippings [incl. article on Jones'
daughter's centennial birthday] n.d., 1971,
1983 (box 2, folder 4)

Programs, Christian Commission,
Correspondence, and other Historical
Documents 1855, 1863-1865, 1911-1912,
1926 (box 2, folder 6)

(see also: Founding Papers - Deeds)

(see also: Photographs - Founders)

(see also: Catalog search for Williston Jones
will turn up his library and biography)

(see also: Alumni - Carol, George R. [first
student])

(see also: Alumni - Jewell, James Ralph [Daniel
Coe's Grandson])

(see also: Board of Trustees - Ely, John F, served
1853-1902)

(see also: Board of Trustees - Greene, George,
served 1866-1902)

(see also: Board of Trustees - Knox, James,
served 1866-1875)

(see also: Board of Trustees - Sinclair Family)

(see also: Faculty/Staff - Condit, Robert Aaron,
Principal Coe Collegiate Institute 1975-1881)

(see also: Faculty/Staff - Erik McKinley Eriksson,
professor of history, 1925-1929 [wrote several
books on Coe's history])

(see also: Presidents - Phelps, Stephen [First
President of Coe College])

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**Un-identified Historical Documents (box 1, folder
12)**

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