

# **Guide to the Torrance Family Letters, Receipts, and Other Material 1865, 1894-1897, 1909-1915**

2007.2

Special Collections  
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library  
Plattsburgh State University College  
Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901

By  
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Introduction by  
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September 2008

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## **Introduction**

Housed in one Hollinger box, the bulk of this collection consists of Fred A. Torrance's letters to his family from the Plattsburgh Normal School and Colgate University, where he studied to be a teacher. In his letters he writes about his classes, church, and the weather, and makes inquiries about his family's health. Several letters are between the school and Fred's mother when Fred contracts a serious case of the measles.

Also in the collection are a few business letters and receipts belonging to Fred's parents, Ira A. and Lucy E. Smith Torrance. Other miscellaneous materials include a newspaper announcement of the marriage of Grace Blanchard and Martin G. Torrance and a letter from William Conely.

Austin and Triphine Torrance had two sons, Ira and Ephraim, who both fought in the American Civil War. It is assumed that Austin died before his sons went to war because records show that Triphine remarried to George Washington Stickney in 1858. Stickney's son, George, also served in the Civil War.

Ira married Lucy Smith and they had three children, with only Fred surviving infancy. Fred was born on January 11, 1878 near Upper Jay, New York. The Torrance family home was often the center for social events in the town of Jay. Lucy was head of the Helping Hands Society and also very active in the First Baptist Church.

After graduation, Fred first taught fourteen children in a Keeseville schoolhouse. He later taught 30 school children in Redford. When his father fell ill he returned home and served as Jay's tax collector from 1903-1906.

On September 20, 1906 he married Kathryn Finch Bisell and they had three children named Ira S., Isabelle L., and Robert A. Shortly after marrying, the couple moved to

Albany so that Fred could go to law school. He worked at odd jobs and owned a store until he became a member of the New York Bar Association in 1909.

His law degree heralded the beginning of his long career as a public servant. He served as Keeseville Justice of the Peace from 1911-1914, Jay Town Supervisor from 1915-1938, and Essex County Treasurer from 1939 until his retirement in 1948. He was a devout Republican and was a member of the Essex County Bar Association and the Essex County Republican Committee for over 20 years.

Fred Torrance also wrote poetry and, loved farming. In 1914 he planted an apple orchard, which eventually grew to approximately 1,000 trees. He was a friend of the artist Rockwell Kent, with whom he traveled to Greenland in 1934. Fred A. Torrance passed away on December 11, 1948.

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### Background Sources in Special Collections

Torrance, Isabelle. Fred A. *Torrance: His Life, Times, and Philosophy, Including His Early Articles on the Town of Jay*. Troy, N.Y.: Prout Printers, 1982.

Torrance, Fred A. *The Kiln*. Troy, N.Y.: Prout Printers, 1959.

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### Contents

#### Box 1

##### Series 1: William Conely Letter

##### Folder 1

Item 1      From William Conely  
                 To: His Aunt \_\_\_\_\_  
                 April 18, 1865  
                 Subjects: Frontier Cavalry, Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor,  
                 N.Y., Hiram [T]aby

##### Series 2: Correspondence, 1894-97

Bulk: Fred A. Torrance to Ira A. Torrance

##### Folder 2      1894-95

Item 1      Report Card, School Commissioner's Office, Elizabethtown  
                 August 29, 1894, Mr. Fred A. Torrance, Jay

Item 2      From: David ?, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
                 To: Fred A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 October 28, 1894  
                 Subjects: Paul Reynolds (roommate)

Item 3 From: Fred A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
Feb. 16, 1895  
Subjects: Fred, Normal School student, Plattsburgh, roommate,  
[Avirel?] Cutter

Item 4 From: School Commissioner's Office, Elizabethtown  
To: Mr. Fred A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 21, 1895  
Empty envelope

**Folder 3 February-March, 1896**

Item 1 From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
February 4, 1896  
Subjects: Arrival at Normal School, Boarding with M. G. Lasell

Item 2 To: Mrs. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
February 7, 1896  
Subjects: Invitation from The Delta Chapter of the Clonian  
Fraternity, Plattsburgh Normal School

Item 3 From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mrs. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
February 8, 1896  
Subjects: Fred, Plattsburgh, Normal School, Icy Sidewalks,  
People falling

Item 4 From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
February 22, 1896,  
Subjects: Frederic, Plattsburgh, bitter cold (30 below zero),  
Y.M.C.A.

Item 5: From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 8, 1896,  
Subjects: Fred, Plattsburgh

Item 6: From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 15, 1896

Item 7: Subjects: Fred, Plattsburgh  
From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 22, 1896  
Subjects: Fred, Plattsburgh

Item 8: From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 29, 1896  
Subjects: Fred, Plattsburgh

**Folder 4 April, 1896**

Item 1: From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 12, 1896  
Subjects: Fred, Plattsburgh

Item 2: From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 19, 1896  
Subjects: Fred, Plattsburgh

Item 3: From: Fred. A. Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 21, 1896  
Subjects: Cliff Smith, nephew, Plattsburgh, Fred has the measles

Item 4: From: Fred G. Smith  
To: Telegram to Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 22, 1896  
Subjects: Fred has the measles—wants his mother

Item 5: From: Lucy Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 22, 1896  
Subjects: Fred's measles

Item 6: From: Lucy Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 23, 1896  
Subjects: Fred's measles

Item 7: From: Lucy Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 24, 1896  
Subjects: Fred's measles

Item 8: From: Lucy Torrance, Plattsburgh, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 25, 1896  
Subjects: Fred's measles

**Folder 5    Nov., Dec., 1896**

- Item 1        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 November 3, 1896  
                 Fred, Keeseville, teaching
  
- Item 2        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 November 8, 1896  
                 Fred, Keeseville
  
- Item 3        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 November 19, 1896  
                 Fred, Keeseville
  
- Item 4        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 December 5, 1896  
                 Fred, Keeseville
  
- Item 5        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 December 12, 1896  
                 Fred, Keeseville
  
- Item 6        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 December 18, 1896  
                 Fred, Keeseville

**Folder 6    Jan., Feb., 1897**

- Item 1        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 January 10, 1897
  
- Item 2        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 January 17, 1897
  
- Item 3        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 January 23, 1897
  
- Item 4        From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
                 To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
                 January 30, 1897

- Item 5      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Dear Friends (Probably Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.)  
February 7, 1897  
One page of letter, no envelope
  
- Item 6      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
February 22, 1897
  
- Item 7      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
February 28, 1897

**Folder 7      March, April, 1897**

- Item 1      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 7, 1897
  
- Item 2      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 14, 1897  
Subjects: Fred, son, Keeseville, Halsey Straight, [Mort?] Lincoln
  
- Item 3      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
March 21, 1897
  
- Item 4      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 7, 1897  
Subjects: Fred, Teaching in Redford
  
- Item 5      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 11, 1897  
Subjects: Fred, Redford, news of death of grandfather
  
- Item 6      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 23, 1897  
Subjects: Fred, Redford
  
- Item 7      From: Fred A. Torrance, Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. Ira A. Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
April 25, 1897  
Subjects: Fred, Redford

**Series Three: Letters and receipts, 1903, November 13 – 1915, October 12  
Lucy E. Torrance—Mrs. Ira A. Torrance, Mr. F. A. Torrance**

**Folder 8      Comprises Series 3**

- Item 1      From: Warren (nephew), Watertown, N.Y.  
To: Mrs. Lucy Torrance, Jay, N.Y.  
November 13, 1906  
Subjects: Rev. Warren Cyril Taylor, Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church,  
Watertown (Lucy Torrance nephew), typewritten,  
Includes a program for the Nov. 11, 1906 service at the Calvary  
Baptist Church
- Item 2      From: Hattie, Manchester, N.H.  
To: Mrs. Ira Torrance, Mooers, N.Y. (care of George Cotton)  
November 25, 1906  
Includes obituary for Joseph Addison Hutchinson
- Item 3      From: Fred A. Torrance, Albany, N.Y.  
To: Mrs. Lucy E. Torrance, Essex County, N.Y.  
May 2, 1909  
Includes Inventory of Fixtures and Books in F. A. Torrance Law  
Office, Jay, N.Y.
- Item 4      From: R. Prescott & Son, Dr., Keeseville, N.Y.  
To: Mr. F. A. Torrance, Ausable Forks  
December 28, 1911  
Statement for purchase of doors and windows
- Item 5      From: W. A. Deal, Pharmacist, Ausable Forks, N.Y.  
To: Mrs. L. E. Torrance  
April 1, 1913  
Statement
- Item 6      From: A.J. Merrill, M.D., Jay, N.Y.  
To: Mrs. Ira Torrance, Ausable Forks, N.Y.  
July 16, 1913  
Statement
- Item 7      From: Pierpont E. Bull, Central Cemetery Association, Jay, N.Y.  
To: Mrs. Lucy Torrance, Ausable Forks, N.Y.  
October 1, 1913; October 12, 1915  
Notice of assessments on cemetery lot  
Includes empty envelope: "Cemetery Deed & Other Cemetery  
papers"

Item 8      From: Pierpont E. Bull, Central Cemetery Association, Jay, N.Y.  
              To: Mrs. Lucy Torrance, Ausable Forks, N.Y.  
              November 1, 1912; November 10, 1913; November 13, 1913  
              February 13, 1917  
              Receipts and letter

Item 9      From: Dr. A. J. Merrill, Jay, N.Y.  
              To: Mrs. Lucy E. Torrance, Ausable Forks, N.Y.  
              May 11, 1914  
              Receipt

**Series Four: Miscellaneous Material**

**Folder 9      Comprises Series Four**

Item 1      Oct. 6, ????, Marriage announcement, unknown newspaper, Miss  
              Grace Blanchard to Martin G. Torrance, Jay

Item 2      3 Short notes, unknown sender or recipient (one from Hattie with  
              lock of hair)