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.

Background Sources in Special Collections


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)
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 Clionian 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**  
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 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
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)