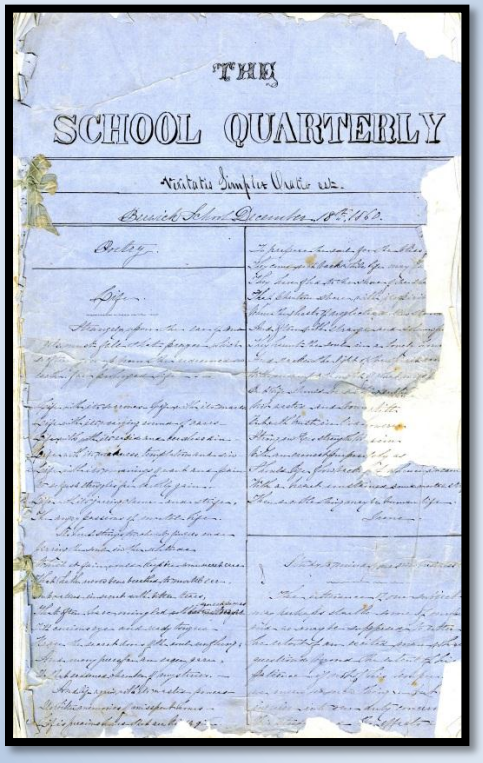
ESTHER CLARK WRIGHT ARCHIVES

ACADIA UNIVERSITY

BERWICK SCHOOL FONDS

Accession 1900.367-BER


THE

SCHOOL QUARTERLY

Compiled by Greg Brown, 2005

Revised 2011

Berwick School fonds. – [textual records]. – 1860. – less than 1cm of textual records

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Scope and Content

The fonds consists of one item – The Berwick School's newspaper, entitled *The School Quarterly.*

The School Quarterly. – 18 December 1860. – 18 pages of textual records

The School Quarterly was a handwritten literary journal that was begun at The Berwick School in January 1860 and assembled by Principal Alice Shaw and her students.

File contains the final issue, produced just before the school closed its doors on 18 December 1860. Much of the actual penmanship was the work of one person, probably Alice Shaw herself. The journal begins with a quote from Seneca, "The language of truth is simple", and features approximately seventeen essays and poetry. Some are signed and some are not. Irene [Elder] and Bessie [Shaw] are two of the principal contributors. Other articles are attributed to the "Editors of the Quarterly". The subject matter is what you might expect from young Christian ladies of this time period. Titles include: The *Christian Wayfarer*, *Home*, *Female Accomplishment*, *Life's Retrospect* and *Earth's Benefactors*. The style, grammar and vocabulary reflect not only the time period but Alice Shaw's Holyoke Seminary training as well. *The School Quarterly* provides a view of the education of women in the mid-1800s; an insight into the work of Alice Shaw; and is a reflection of The Berwick School itself.

Note: Title transcribed from item

Administrative History

There were many schools for young women set up in Nova Scotia in the 1850s. One of these was founded in Berwick by Alice T. Shaw. In the summer of 1859, Alice set up an educational institution called, "The Berwick School". This school was known by at least two other names in addition to this one: "The Berwick Seminary", and "The Select School for Young Ladies". Word began to spread that this was a school with a difference. In their book *The Religious Life of Acadia*, A. C. Chute and W. B. Boggs point out that "Miss Shaw's school soon became a rallying point for young ladies who were anxious for more extended advantages than the common school gave"[1]. In January 1860, music was added to the curriculum and taught by M. Laurillard and her assistant, Emmeline A. Eaton. Enrollment soon reached almost 20 and there was room for more. In January 1860, Alice added a literary journal, *The School Quarterly*, and it was received with much enthusiasm, not only by the members of the school but by the citizens of Berwick as well.

Alice Shaw and her school's relationship with the town of Berwick was an important part of the institution's success. However in late 1860, pressures were being placed on her to move. A group of gentlemen in Wolfville, home of Acadia College and Horton Academy, expressed a desire to open a ladies' school there. One of these gentlemen was Rev. T. A. Higgins, the principal of Horton Academy. He convinced Shaw that her needs and those of her students would be best served by relocating to Wolfville. She must have had some doubts; she confessed as much in her correspondence[2] and she even advertised for another term at Berwick, to begin in January 1861. It is obvious from some of the articles in the school's journal that as late as 18 December 1860, there were no definite plans to close the school and move out of Berwick. In the end, however, the move was made and she and twenty of her Berwick students opened the new Grand Pré Seminary at Wolfville. Nova Scotia on 2 January 1861. The Berwick School had been in existence from September 1859 to December 1860.

Custodial History

This document has been in the holdings of the Esther Clark Wright Archives at Acadia University for an undetermined period of time. There is no record of the donor or the date it was given.

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[1] A. C. Chute and W. G. Boggs, *The Religious Life of Acadia,* (Kentville Publishing Co. Ltd., 1933), p. 53

[2] Davison, J. D. *Alice of Grand Pré*, Wolfville; Acadia University, 1981 p. 57-8

Notes

Supplied title based on contents of fonds.

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The founder of the Berwick School, Alice T. Shaw, was a graduate of Mount Holyoke Seminary in Massachusetts. Shaw was a native of Pleasant Valley, Nova Scotia, (renamed Berwick in 1850). Shaw was born in 1832 and baptized in the Berwick Baptist Church in 1849. She exhibited an interest in literature at an early age and was a voracious reader. Her writing displayed a poetic style and she produced some pieces of verse as well as prose. Shaw taught school in the Berwick area for at least one year and then in 1854, with the encouragement of Isaac Chipman of Acadia College, she decided to attend Holyoke along with two other local girls. She spent three years at the American school and after graduating taught at two different schools, one in the United States and one in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

See also Chipman Family fonds, 1923.001-CHI, for more records relating to Alice (nee Shaw) Chipman.

Citation for this electronic finding aid:

This finding aid should be cited as a website. Relevant information is as follows:

Title: Berwick School fonds
Date: 2011
Author: Esther Clark Wright Archives, Acadia University

Access Points

Shaw, Alice T. (1832-1921)

Chipman, Alice Shaw (1832-1921)

Berwick School (Kings County, N.S.)

Grand Pre Seminary (Wolfville, Kings County, N.S.)

Schools—Kings County (N.S.)