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Finding Aid to the Collection of Osborne Family Materials

Osborne Family

Colby College Special Collections

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Collection of Osborne Family Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.

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Finding Aid to the Collection of Osborne Family Materials OSBORNE.1

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Colby College Special Collections

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Summary Information

Repository:	Colby College Special Collections
Title:	Collection of Osborne Family Materials.
ID:	OSBORNE.1
Date [inclusive]:	1865-2018
Physical Description:	0.5 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	<p>The Osborne Family Collection centers on the members of an early African American family who settled in Waterville, Maine after the Civil War. The collection contains materials relating to Samuel Osborne (1883-1904), his wife, Maria Iverson Osborne (1836-1913), and their children: Flora Molly Osborne Strange (1854-1921), Amelia Osborne (1857-1930), and Lulu Clifton Osborne Connor (1864-1907?), all born in slavery in Virginia. The remaining Osborne children: Isabelle Osborne (1868), Annie J. Osborne (1869-1901), Alice E. Osborne (1871-1968), Edward Samuel Osborne (1874-1956), and Marion Thompson Osborne Matheson (1878-1954) were born in Waterville, Maine. Samuel Osborne worked as the Colby College Janitor for 37 years, and was an active participant in local community groups, the Baptist Church, and the Order of Good Templars (a Temperance organization). The Osbornes' daughter Amelia served as the housemother to the Delta Upsilon fraternity at Colby, and their two youngest children attended the college: Edward with the Class of 1897 (a non-graduate) and Marion with the Class of 1900. Marion was the first African American woman to graduate from Colby. The collection contains photographs, clippings, and published materials relating to the Osborne Family and their lives in Waterville.</p>

Preferred Citation

Collection of Osborne Family Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.

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Biographical / Historical

Samuel Osborne (1833-1904) was an African American freed slave who settled his family in Waterville, Maine, at the end of the Civil War. Osborne worked as a janitor for 37 years at Colby College. Two of his children, Edward and Marion, were among the first black students at the college; Marion would be the first African American woman to graduate from Colby with the Class of 1900. Marion, along with her sisters Annie, Alice and Lulu, and several of the Osborne grandchildren would go on to serve their communities as teachers.

Samuel Osborne was born on October 20, 1833, on the slave plantation of Dr. William Welford in Lanesville, Virginia, and grew up in Fredericksburg where Welford relocated. There he was raised with another child slave, Maria Iverson (1836-1913), whom he would eventually marry. Sam was hired out to a local boarding school for boys where he first acquired experience working with youth in an academic setting, experience he would later draw on during his career at Colby. The Osbornes and their three young daughters, Flora, Amelia, and Lulu, were freed as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation but continued to work as servants until the end of the Civil War.

Osborne worked for a time in the office of Col. Stephen Fletcher (Colby Class of 1859), the U.S. Provost Marshall at Danville, Virginia. In May 1865, Fletcher returned to his home town of Waterville, Maine, accompanied by Sam and two of his daughters. Sam began work at the Maine Central Railroad, and within six months was able to bring his wife, Maria, their third daughter, and his father, Richard, to join him in Waterville. Richard began work as the janitor at Colby University, but when he died early in 1866 at age 73, Sam took over his role at the college.

Sam came to excel at the position of College Janitor, which was steady work but chronically underpaid. The family's financial stress and the birth of another daughter, Isabelle, who died in infancy in 1868, may have led to their "adopting out" their daughter, Lulu Clifton Osborne (1864-1907?), to the household of Colby Professor Charles E. Hamlin and his wife, Elizabeth. The Hamlins, who were childless, raised Lulu as their own, although no official documentation of her adoption exists. Lulu retained her family name of Osborne, even when she accompanied the Hamlins to Cambridge, Mass., where Hamlin took a position at Harvard. Lulu graduated from Cambridge High School in 1882 and became a teacher in Burlington County, New Jersey, where she married a fellow teacher, Theodore E.H. Connor.

The oldest daughter, Flora Molly Osborne (1854-1921) married Emile N. Strange, the eldest son of another black family who for a time shared the Osborne residence at 5 Ash Street in Waterville in the 1870s. Flora would run a boarding house nearby at 11 Ash Street. Amelia Osborne (1857-1930) became a nurse, and later served as the housemother to the Delta Upsilon fraternity at Colby.

The Osbornes had four other children born in Waterville: Annie, Alice, Edward, and Marion. Annie J. Osborne (1869-1901) became a teacher in Kent County, Maryland. Alice E. Osborne (1871-1968) was a grammar school teacher in the Waterville public schools, and later a book keeper in a local doctor's office. Edward Samuel Osborne (1874-1956) attended Colby in 1893-1894 (as a youngster he had found early work as an organ pumper in the college chapel) and was a standout on the baseball team. Edward withdrew from Colby to enter the workforce, beginning a 59-year career as a local Railway Express Agency Messenger. Marion Thompson Osborne Matheson (1878-1954) was the first African American

woman graduate of Colby in 1900; she served as a teacher in Brooklyn, N.Y., and later worked as a secretary.

In spite of many obstacles Samuel Osborne was able to establish a significant role for himself and his family in the Waterville community. During his lengthy 37-year tenure as College Janitor, spanning seven administrations of college presidents, Osborne became recognized as a central figure at Colby. At his death on July 1, 1904, Samuel Osborne, an unschooled former slave, left a legacy of service to education, one that was carried on by the Osborne Family through the work of many of his children and grandchildren.

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Scope and Contents

The collection contains photographs, clippings, and published materials relating to Samuel Osborne and his family. The collection also includes alumni files for Edward Samuel Osborne (Colby Class of 1897, non-graduate) and Marion Thompson Osborne Matheson (Colby Class of 1900), as well as correspondence between the college and members of the Osborne family.

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Arrangement

Materials arranged in six series: Samuel Osborne Materials, Maria Iverson Osborne Materials, Edward Samuel Osborne Materials, Marion Thompson Osborne Materials, Additional Osborne Family Materials, and Photographs.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Colby College Special Collections

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Materials acquired via gift or purchase.

Conditions Governing Access

Materials to be used on site during regular Special Collections hours or by appointment. Photocopying or scanning may be possible at discretion of staff for nominal fee. Digital cameras are permitted. Materials may be protected by copyright.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection is open for research.

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Controlled Access Headings

- African Americans -- Maine -- Waterville -- History
- Janitors--Maine--Waterville--Biography
- African American College Students
- African American Women Teachers
- African Americans--Education (Higher)--Maine--Waterville
- Alumnae and alumni
- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904
- Osborne, Maria Iverson, 1836-1913
- Strange, Flora Molly Osborne, 1854-1921
- Osborne, Amelia, 1857-1930
- Connor, Lulu Clifton Osborne, 1864-1907?
- Osborne, Alice E., 1871-1968
- Osborne, Annie J., 1869-1901
- Osborne, Edward Samuel, 1874-1956
- Matheson, Marion Thompson Osborne, 1879-1954

Collection Inventory

Series A: Samuel Osborne Materials, 1865-1979

Date [inclusive]: 1865-1979

Physical Description: 6 folders.

Subseries 1: Correspondence regarding Samuel Osborne

Physical Description: 3 folders.

Title/Description	Instances
Folder A1: Letter from R.E. Withers to S.C. Fletcher, 1865-07-12	
<u>Date</u> : 1865-07-12	
<u>Physical Description</u> : 1 items.	
General	
Transcript of letter discussing relocation of Osborne family members from Virginia to Waterville, Maine.	
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u> :	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Osborne, Alice E., 1871-1968 	
Folder A2: Letter from Laura McKusick Berthold, 1965-07-06	
<u>Date</u> : 1965-07-06	
<u>Physical Description</u> : 1 t.l.s.	
Folder A3: Letters from Ernest Cummings Marriner, 1963-08-29-1979-06-21	
<u>Creator - Correspondent</u> : Ernest Cummings Marriner, 1891-1983	
<u>Date [inclusive]</u> : 1963-08-29-1979-06-21	
<u>Physical Description</u> : 2 items.	
General	
Letters from the Colby College Historian, Ernest Cummings Marriner, to Charles S. Brown and William R. Cotter, regarding early African-American students and employees of the college, including Osborne family members. William R. Cotter became the president of Colby College.	

Subseries 2: Published Works and other Written Materials

Physical Description: 3 folders.

Title/Description	Instances
Folder A4: Published Biographical Works, 1913	
<u>Date</u> : 1913	
<u>Physical Description</u> : 1 items.	

General

Monograph: Samuel Osborne Janitor. By Frederick Morgan Padelford. Boston: LeRoy Phillips, c1913.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904

Folder A5: Manuscripts and Printed Materials, 1881-2018

Date [inclusive]: 1881-2018

Physical Description: 20 items.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904

Subseries 3: Transcripts of Audio Materials

Physical Description: 1 folders.

Title/Description	Instances
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Folder A6: Transcripts of Media Broadcasts, 1951-1978

Creator: Ernest Cummings Marriner, 1891-1983

Date [inclusive]: 1951-1978

Physical Description: 4 items.

General

Transcribed excerpts from "Little Talks" by Ernest Cummings Marriner.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904

Subseries 4: Clippings

Physical Description: 1 folders.

Title/Description	Instances
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Folder A7: Clippings Related to Samuel Osborne, 1894-1968 and undated

Date [inclusive]: 1894-1968 and undated

Physical Description: 19 items.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904

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Series B: Maria Iverson Osborne Materials, 1902-1913

Date [inclusive]: 1902-1913

Physical Description: 2 folders.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Maria Iverson, 1836-1913

Title/Description	Instances
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Folder B1: Probate Documents Regarding Osborne Estate, 1902-1904	
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Date [inclusive]: 1902-1904

Physical Description: 1 folders.

General

Copy of documents relating to Samuel Osborne's estate to which Maria Iverson Osborne served as Executrix.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904

Folder B2: Obituary for Maria Iverson Osborne, 1913-04-30

Date: 1913-04-30

Physical Description: 1 items.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Maria Iverson, 1836-1913

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Series C: Edward Samuel Osborne Materials, 1894-2002 and undated

Date [inclusive]: 1894-2002 and undated

Title/Description	Instances
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Folder C1: Alumni File for Edward Samuel Osborne, Class of 1897 (non-graduate), 1894-05-18-2002-01-10	
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Date [inclusive]: 1894-05-18-2002-01-10

Physical Description: 1 folders.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Edward Samuel, 1874-1956

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Series D: Marion Thompson Osborne Matheson Materials, 1900-2015 and undated

Date [inclusive]: 1900-2015 and undated

Physical Description: 1 folders.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Matheson, Marion Thompson Osborne, 1879-1954

Title/Description

Instances

Folder D1: Alumni File for Maria Thompson Osborne Matheson,
Class of 1900, 1900-2015

Date [inclusive]: 1900-2015

Physical Description: 1 folders.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Matheson, Marion Thompson Osborne, 1879-1954

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Series E: Additional Osborne Family Materials, 1889-2018 and undated

Date [inclusive]: 1889-2018 and undated

Physical Description: 2 folders.

Title/Description

Instances

Folder E1: Materials Related to Other Osborne Family Members,
1889-1968 and undated

Date [inclusive]: 1889-1968 and undated

Physical Description: 6 items.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Connor, Lulu Clifton Osborne, 1864-1907?
- Osborne, Alice E., 1871-1968

Folder E2: Copies of Clippings, 1894-2018 and undated

Date [inclusive]: 1894-2018 and undated

Physical Description: 20 items.

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Series F: Photographs, 1865-1956 and undated

Date [inclusive]: 1865-1956 and undated

Physical Description: 4 folders.

Title/Description

Instances

Folder F1: Studio Portraits of Samuel Osborne, circa 1875-1895

Date [inclusive]: circa 1875-1895

Physical Description: 8 photographs 7 Cabinet photographs, 1
Carte de visite

General

1 3/4 profile view circa 1890 by the C.G. Carleton Studio, No.66 Main Street, Waterville, Me.; 1 3/4 profile Carte de visite circa 1875 by the C.G. Carleton Studio, Waterville, Me.; 1 frontal view circa 1888 by the Conant Studio, Elm Street, Skowhegan, Me.; 2 copies 3/4 profile view circa 1888 by the H.F. Holland Studio, 10 Temple Place, Boston, Mass.; 3 copies frontal view circa 1895, M.F. King Studio (Portland, Me.).

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904
-

Folder F2: Photographs of Samuel Osborne on Old Colby College Campus, circa 1880-1902

Date [inclusive]: circa 1880-1902

Physical Description: 14 photographs

General

5 copies (4 mounted, 1 half-tone print) full-length view standing before door to Champlin Hall circa 1880; 1 view carrying mailbag on pathway through Boardman Willows circa 1885; 5 copies view standing by water fountain outside Champlin Hall circa 1895 (1 cropped enlargement, 1 with accession #2011_302104); 1 view standing by water fountain outside Champlin Hall with unidentified man circa 1895; 1 portrait view in janitor's uniform originally published in Osborne's obituary in the Lewiston Saturday Journal July 2, 1904; 1 view in large oversize group photo of student body in front of Memorial Hall circa 1882 (stored in oversize box).

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904
-

Folder F3: Photographs of Osborne Family Members, circa 1892-1956

Date [inclusive]: circa 1892-1956

Physical Description: 10 photographs

General

2 copies Group Photo of Samuel and Maria Osborne, their seven children, Annie, Amelia, Edward, Marion, Alice, Flora, and Lulu, and their grandchildren, Beatrice, Harold, and Ethel, circa 1892, location not given (1 copy cropped with accession #2011_302103); 4 copies of photo of Maria I. Osborne seated on the steps of the Osborne residence at 5 Ash Street, Waterville, Me., with a student identified as James Corey Richardson '11, circa June 1906 or 1913 (1 copy is an enlargement of Maria Osborne; 1 copy with accession #2011_302106); 1 childhood photo of Amelia Osborne, circa 1865; 1 photo of Alice E. Osborne seated

outside the Osborne residence at 5 Ash Street, Waterville, Me., circa 1910 (accession #2011_302105); 1 photo of Edward S. Osborne standing beside a railway express wagon, circa 1950; 1 photo of Edward S. Osborne at Sister's Hospital (Waterville, Me.) with classmates identified as Mrs. Minnie Dunn Smith and Edgar Brown, circa 1956.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Maria Iverson, 1836-1913
- Strange, Flora Molly Osborne, 1854-1921
- Osborne, Amelia, 1857-1930
- Connor, Lulu Clifton Osborne, 1864-1907?
- Osborne, Annie J., 1869-1901
- Osborne, Alice E., 1871-1968
- Matheson, Marion Thompson Osborne, 1879-1954
- Osborne, Edward Samuel, 1874-1956
- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904

Folder F4: Negatives, 1966-04-22

Date: 1966-04-22

Physical Description: 3 items. negatives

General

Three 4" x 5" copy negatives produced by Lyle Schulman of the Photo and Engraving Department of the (Waterville) Morning Sentinel on April 22, 1966. Copies were made of three mounted originals owned by Alice E. Osborne: 1 of Maria I. Osborne seated on the steps of the Osborne residence at 5 Ash Street, Waterville, Me., with a student identified as James Corey Richardson '11, circa June 1906; 1 of Alice E. Osborne seated outside the Osborne residence at 5 Ash Street, Waterville, Me., circa 1910; and 1 of Samuel Osborne standing by the water fountain outside Champlin Hall circa 1895.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Osborne, Samuel, 1833-1904
- Osborne, Maria Iverson, 1836-1913
- Osborne, Alice E., 1871-1968

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