

Benjamin Titus Roberts Family Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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2009

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009135>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm82058719>

Prepared by Paul Ledvina
Revised and expanded by Karen Linn Femia

Collection Summary

Title: Benjamin Titus Roberts Family Papers

Span Dates: 1832-1954

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1870-1900)

ID No.: MSS58719

Creator: Roberts, Benjamin Titus, 1823-1893

Extent: 7,200 items ; 38 containers ; 15.2 linear feet ; 34 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Clergyman and founder of the Free Methodist Church of North America. Family and general correspondence, diaries, notebooks, speeches and writings, and other papers of Benjamin Titus Roberts and members of his family concerning family and domestic matters; the Free Methodist Church; the Chili Seminary, later A. M. Chesbrough Seminary, in North Chili, New York; South America; and matters relating to the allied Rice, Sellev, and Stowe families.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Rice family.

Roberts family.

Roberts, Anna A. Rice, -1881. Anna A. Rice Roberts papers. 1869-1881.

Roberts, Benjamin Titus, 1823-1893.

Roberts, Benjamin Titus, 1823-1893. Benjamin Titus Roberts papers, 1844-1895.

Roberts, Benson Howard. Benson Howard Roberts papers. 1875-1924.

Roberts, Ellen Lois Stowe. Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts papers. 1843-1907.

Roberts, Emma Sellev. Emma Sellev Roberts papers. 1875-1906

Roberts, George Lane. George Lane Roberts papers. 1869-1902.

Sellev family.

Stowe family.

Organizations

A.M. Chesbrough Seminary (North Chili, N.Y.)

Chili Seminary (North Chili, N.Y.)

Free Methodist Church of North America.

Methodist Episcopal Church. Genesee Annual Conference.

Subjects

Methodist Church--Clergy.

Methodist Church--Missions.

Methodist Church--New York (State)

Methodist theological seminaries--New York (State)--North Chili.

Practice of law--New York (State)--Rochester.

Practice of law--Pennsylvania--Bradford.

Places

Bradford (Pa.)--Commerce.

Rochester (N.Y.)--Commerce.

South America--Description and travel.

Occupations

Clergy.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Benjamin Titus Roberts, clergyman and founder of the Free Methodist Church of North America, and his family were donated to the Library of Congress in 1979 and 1992-1993 by Fannie W. Zahniser, widow of Roberts's biographer, Clarence H. Zahniser.

Processing History

The papers of the Benjamin Titus Roberts Family were arranged and described in 1983. The collection was expanded and revised in 1997. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Transfers

Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the Benjamin Titus Roberts Family Papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Benjamin Titus Roberts and his family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of the Benjamin Titus Roberts Family are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on 34 reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Benjamin Titus Roberts Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Notes

Benjamin Titus Roberts

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1823, July 25	Born, Gowanda, N.Y.
1842-1844	Apprenticed at law
1848	Graduated, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn. Admitted to the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church
1849	Married Ellen Lois Stowe
1850	Ordained a deacon

1852	Ordained an elder
1858	Expelled from the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church
1860	Organized Free Methodist Church, Pekin, N.Y. (now Free Methodist Church of North America) Began publication of <i>The Earnest Christian</i>
1860-1893	First General Superintendent, Free Methodist Church
1866	Founded the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary (now Roberts Wesleyan College), North Chili, N.Y.
1866-1890	Editor, <i>Free Methodist</i>
1893, Feb. 27	Died, Cattaraugus, N.Y.

Family Members Represented in the Benjamin Titus Roberts Family Papers

- Titus Roberts married Sally Ellis (1803-1896)
 - Benjamin Titus Roberts (1823-1893) married Ellen Lois Stowe (1825-1908)
 - Benson Howard Roberts (1853-1893) married Emma J. Sellew
 - George Lane Roberts married Anna A. Rice (d. 1881)
 - Charles Stowe Roberts married Susan Lowden
 - Benjamin Titus Roberts, Jr., married Sadie B. Kidwell
 - Samuel Roberts

Scope and Content Note

The Benjamin Titus Roberts Family Papers cover the years 1832-1954, with the bulk of the collection dating from 1870 to 1900. Roberts was the founder of the Free Methodist Church of North America and also of the Chili Seminary of North Chili, New York, renamed the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary in 1885 and Roberts Wesleyan College in 1949. Although the collection contains the papers of many family members, the largest sections consist of the papers of Roberts's wife, Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts, and their son, Benson Howard Roberts. Their papers document the development of the Free Methodist Church and of the seminary at North Chili. The papers are organized into the following series: [Anna A. Rice Roberts Papers](#), [Benjamin Titus Roberts Papers](#), [Benson Howard Roberts Papers](#), [Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts Papers](#), [Emma J. Sellew Roberts Papers](#), [George Lane Roberts Papers](#), [Other Family Members](#), and [Addition](#).

The papers of [Benjamin Titus Roberts](#) consist chiefly of diaries, notebooks, and family and general correspondence. There are few items documenting his religious activities. Among the more informative manuscripts are letters to his wife Ellen in the family correspondence series of her papers. More correspondence of Benjamin Titus Roberts can be found in the family and general correspondence and the correspondence with overseas missionaries in the [Addition](#) series. A correspondence file in the papers of [Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts](#) relates the activities of her husband, four of their sons and their wives, and various personalities associated with the Free Methodist Church.

The papers of [Benson Howard Roberts](#), clergyman and principal of the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary, and his wife [Emma J. Sellew Roberts](#), consist chiefly of general correspondence, circa 1870-1904, relating to the operation of the school. There are also research notes for Benson's biography of his father, Benjamin Titus Roberts (1900).

The papers of [George Lane Roberts](#) concern his law practice and real estate ventures and his brief residence in South America. The papers of his first wife, [Anna A. Rice Roberts](#), consist chiefly of correspondence with the Rice and Roberts family members and with her friends.

An [Addition](#) to the collection includes correspondence of various family members, booklets documenting the dissension and division within the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Church in the 1850s, and correspondence and documents concerning the overseas missionary work of the Free Methodist Church during the 1880s and 1890s. There are lengthy

letters to Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts and Benjamin Titus Roberts from various missionaries stationed in India and Africa, particularly in South Africa and Liberia.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- [Anna A. Rice Roberts Papers, 1869-1881](#)
- [Benjamin Titus Roberts Papers, 1844-1895](#)
- [Benson Howard Roberts Papers, 1875-1924](#)
- [Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts Papers, 1843-1907](#)
- [Emma J. Sellew Roberts Papers, 1875-1906](#)
- [George Lane Roberts Papers, 1869-1902](#)
- [Other Family Members, 1832-1906](#)
- [Addition, 1842-1954](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-3
REEL 1-2

Series

Anna A. Rice Roberts Papers, 1869-1881

Family and general correspondence, printed matter, school papers, and reports.
Family and general correspondence arranged chronologically. Printed matter, school papers, and reports arranged by type of material.

BOX 4-9
REEL 2-11

Benjamin Titus Roberts Papers, 1844-1895

Diaries, notebooks, family and general correspondence, speeches and writings, financial records, memoranda, and printed matter.
Diaries, notebooks, family and general correspondence, and speeches and writings arranged chronologically. Financial records, memoranda, and printed matter arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX 10-15
REEL 11-15

Benson Howard Roberts Papers, 1875-1924

Family and general correspondence, papers from the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary, financial records, memoranda, notebook, and printed matter.
Family and general correspondence, and papers from the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary arranged chronologically. Financial records, lists, memoranda, notebook, and printed matter arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX 16-28
REEL 16-28

Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts Papers, 1843-1907

Diaries, notebooks, family and general correspondence, cards, invitations, notes, memoranda, and writings.
Diaries, notebooks, and family and general correspondence arranged chronologically. Cards, invitation, notes, memoranda, and writings arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX 29-30
REEL 28-29

Emma J. Sellew Roberts Papers, 1875-1906

Family and general correspondence.
Arranged chronologically.

BOX 31-35
REEL 29-32

George Lane Roberts Papers, 1869-1902

Family and general correspondence, financial records, printed matter, legal papers, awards and certificates, invitations, and school papers.
Family and general correspondence arranged chronologically. Financial records, printed matter, legal papers, awards and certificates, invitations, and school papers arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX 36-37
REEL 33-34

Other Family Members, 1832-1906

Correspondence and miscellany.
Arranged alphabetically by name of family member and chronologically therein.

BOX 38

Addition, 1842-1954

not filmed

Correspondence, financial records, journal, and printed matter.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 20,293

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-3 REEL 1-2	Anna A. Rice Roberts Papers, 1869-1881 Family and general correspondence, printed matter, school papers, and reports. Family and general correspondence arranged chronologically. Printed matter, school papers, and reports arranged by type of material.
BOX 1 REEL 1	Family correspondence, 1871-1881, undated (6 folders)
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	General correspondence
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	1869-1877 (5 folders)
BOX 3 REEL 2	1878-1880, undated
BOX 3 REEL 2	Miscellany
BOX 3 REEL 2	Programs, printed matter, etc., 1871-1879
BOX 3 REEL 2	School papers and reports, 1870-1872
BOX 4-9 REEL 2-11	Benjamin Titus Roberts Papers, 1844-1895 Diaries, notebooks, family and general correspondence, speeches and writings, financial records, memoranda, and printed matter. Diaries, notebooks, family and general correspondence, and speeches and writings arranged chronologically. Financial records, memoranda, and printed matter arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 4 REEL 2-6	Diaries and notebooks
BOX 4 REEL 2-6	1852-1871 (5 folders)
BOX 5 REEL 7-9	1872-1880 (4 folders)
BOX 5 REEL 7-9	Family correspondence
BOX 5 REEL 7-9	1848-1872 (2 folders)

Benjamin Titus Roberts Papers, 1844-1895

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 6 REEL 9	1873-1886 (7 folders)
BOX 7 REEL 9-10	1887-1893, undated (2 folders)
BOX 7 REEL 9-10	General correspondence
BOX 7 REEL 9-10	1856-1887 (3 folders)
BOX 8 REEL 10-11	1888-1893, undated (3 folders)
BOX 8 REEL 10-11	Speeches and writings, 1844-1857, undated (4 folders)
BOX 9 REEL 11	Miscellany, circa 1850-1895
BOX 9 REEL 11	Bills and receipts
BOX 9 REEL 11	Deeds, bonds, and mortgages (2 folders)
BOX 9 REEL 11	Estates and inventory lists
BOX 9 REEL 11	Genesee Camp Ground Association, supreme court case
BOX 9 REEL 11	Lists, memoranda, and writings of others
BOX 9 REEL 11	Printed matter
BOX 10-15 REEL 11-15	Benson Howard Roberts Papers, 1875-1924 Family and general correspondence, papers from the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary, financial records, memoranda, notebook, and printed matter. Family and general correspondence, and papers from the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary arranged chronologically. Financial records, lists, memoranda, notebook, and printed matter arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 10 REEL 11-12	Family correspondence, 1875-1905, undated
BOX 10 REEL 11-12	General correspondence
BOX 10 REEL 11-12	1879-Sept. 1896 (4 folders)
BOX 11	Oct. 1896-Nov. 1898

Benson Howard Roberts Papers, 1875-1924

Container

Contents

REEL 12

(6 folders)

BOX 12

Jan. 1899-Dec. 1900

REEL 12-13

(5 folders)

BOX 13

Jan. 1901-Sept. 1903

REEL 13-14

(5 folders)

BOX 14

Oct. 1903-1924, undated

REEL 14-15

(6 folders)

BOX 15

Miscellany

REEL 15

BOX 15

Bills and receipts, 1898-1903

REEL 15

(2 folders)

BOX 15

Lists, memoranda, and notebook

REEL 15

BOX 15

Printed matter

REEL 15

BOX 16-28

Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts Papers, 1843-1907

REEL 16-28

Diaries, notebooks, family and general correspondence, cards, invitations, notes, memoranda, and writings.

Diaries, notebooks, and family and general correspondence arranged chronologically. Cards, invitation, notes, memoranda, and writings arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX 16

Diaries and notebooks

REEL 16-18

BOX 16

1852-1897

REEL 16-18

(6 folders)

BOX 17

Undated fragments

REEL 18-19

BOX 17

Family correspondence

REEL 18-19

BOX 17

1843-1873

REEL 18-19

(7 folders)

BOX 18

1874-1878

REEL 19-20

(7 folders)

BOX 19

1879-1881

REEL 20

(6 folders)

BOX 21

1882-1888

REEL 20-21

(5 folders)

BOX 21

1889-1907, undated

Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts Papers, 1843-1907

Container

Contents

REEL 21-22	(7 folders)
BOX 22	General correspondence
REEL 22	
BOX 22	1844-1871
REEL 22	
	(8 folders)
BOX 23	1872-1878
REEL 23	
	(6 folders)
BOX 24	1879-1880
REEL 24	
	(4 folders)
BOX 25	1881-1886
REEL 24-25	
	(6 folders)
BOX 26	1887-1893
REEL 26	
	(5 folders)
BOX 27	1894-1907
REEL 27	
	(5 folders)
BOX 28	Undated
REEL 27-28	
	(4 folders)
BOX 28	Miscellany, circa 1849-1904
REEL 27-28	
BOX 28	Cards, invitations, etc.
REEL 27-28	
BOX 28	Notes, memoranda, and writings
REEL 27-28	
BOX 29-30	Emma J. Sellew Roberts Papers, 1875-1906
REEL 28-29	
	Family and general correspondence. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 29	Family correspondence
REEL 28-29	
BOX 29	1875-1903
REEL 28-29	
	(4 folders)
BOX 30	1904-1906, undated
REEL 29	
	(2 folders)
BOX 30	General correspondence, 1891-1906, undated
REEL 29	
	(3 folders)
BOX 31-35	George Lane Roberts Papers, 1869-1902

George Lane Roberts Papers, 1869-1902

Container

Contents

REEL 29-32

Family and general correspondence, financial records, printed matter, legal papers, awards and certificates, invitations, and school papers.

Family and general correspondence arranged chronologically. Financial records, printed matter, legal papers, awards and certificates, invitations, and school papers arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX 31

Family correspondence, 1869-1902, undated

REEL 29-30

(5 folders)

BOX 31

General correspondence

REEL 29-30

BOX 31

1872-1877

REEL 29-30

(2 folders)

BOX 32

1878-1899, undated

REEL 30

(6 folders)

BOX 33

Miscellany, circa 1875-1900

REEL 31

BOX 33

Bills and receipts

REEL 31

(3 folders)

BOX 33

Cards, invitations, and programs

REEL 31

BOX 34

Cards, invitations, and programs

REEL 31-32

BOX 34

Legal papers, certificates, and awards

REEL 31-32

BOX 34

Newspaper clippings

REEL 31-32

(2 folders)

BOX 35

(1 folder)

REEL 32

BOX 35

Printed matter

REEL 32

BOX 35

School papers, notebooks, etc.

REEL 32

(2 folders)

BOX 36-37

Other Family Members, 1832-1906

REEL 33-34

Correspondence and miscellany.

Arranged alphabetically by name of family member and chronologically therein.

BOX 36

Lane, George and Lydia, 1832-1865

REEL 33

BOX 36

Roberts, Benjamin T., Jr.

REEL 33

BOX 36

1871-1902, undated

Other Family Members, 1832-1906

Container

Contents

REEL 33

(2 folders)

BOX 37

Bills and receipts, miscellany

REEL 33-34

BOX 37

Roberts, Charles Stowe, 1875-1906

REEL 33-34

BOX 37

Roberts, Sally Ellis, 1884-1888

REEL 33-34

BOX 37

Roberts, Samuel, 1871-1874

REEL 33-34

BOX 37

Roberts, Susan Lowden, 1903

REEL 33-34

BOX 37

Roberts, Titus, 1847-1856, 1881, undated

REEL 33-34

BOX 38

Addition, 1842-1954

not filmed

Correspondence, financial records, journal, and printed matter.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

BOX 38

Correspondence

BOX 38

The Earnest Christian, 1892-1898, undated

BOX 38

Miscellaneous, 1883, 1890-1899, 1934

BOX 38

Roberts, Anna A. Rice, 1870-1874

BOX 38

Roberts, Benjamin Titus

BOX 38

General, 1851, 1867-1879, 1883-1893

BOX 38

With Ellen Lois Stowe Roberts, 1852, 1879-1887, undated

BOX 38

Roberts, Benson Howard, 1893-1906

BOX 38

Roberts, Ellen Lois Stowe, 1851-1906, undated

(2 folders)

BOX 38

Financial records, 1866-1868, 1877-1879, 1895-1898

BOX 38

Journal, Benjamin Titus Roberts' trip to England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1888

BOX 38

Mission work

BOX 38

Correspondence, 1872, 1883-1907, undated

(4 folders)

BOX 38

Printed matter, 1897-1906, 1918, 1928, 1954, undated

BOX 38

Obituary notices, Benjamin Titus Roberts, 1893

BOX 38

Printed matter, 1842, 1856-1860, 1885, 1900, undated