

# **Guide to the Charles Wesley Parsons Papers**

**1892-2003**



# **DREW**

Published for Drew University Methodist Archives By  
General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940  
02/29/2012



# Charles Wesley Parsons Papers

1892-2003

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The purpose of this finding aid is to help you understand the nature of this collection and to assist you in the retrieval of material from this collection. The following pages contain a brief biographical history of the person, or persons, who created or collected these papers; followed by a general description of the collection in the scope and content note. If more detailed information is warranted then series descriptions also appear.

The container listing appears last and is the listing of material in each box, or container, of this collection. To request material you need to turn to the container listing section. It is essentially a listing of file folders, or artifact items, in the collection. Each folder, or item, has a call number associated with it. Each folder also lists the inclusive dates of the material in the folder. On the material request form list both the call number and the folder, or item, title. Use a different line for each folder, or item, requested. When your request sheet is complete, or full, bring it to the archivist and the material will be retrieved.

## Biographical Note

Charles Wesley Parsons (1851-1907), American Minister, was born in Decatur, New York, on January 7, 1851 to Reverend George and Mrs. Parsons. Parsons' formal education included stops at Springfield Academy, Cazenovia Seminary, Wyoming (PA) Conference Seminary and Drew Theological School. After leaving Drew in 1874, Parsons was appointed to Fairfield, New York, Methodist Episcopal Church where he met his wife, Emma R. Ford. They were married on August 1, 1876 and their union produced four children.

After serving in Fairfield, he ministered in succession Gouverneur, Watertown, and Rome churches, all in New York State. From Rome, Parsons headed to Kansas City to be the pastor of Grand Avenue. The church produced two other church plants under his direction, Independence Avenue and Howard Memorial. Parsons oversaw their explosive growth as well as his own church. The stress of the work broke his health. Trigeminal Neuralgia would plague him for the rest of his life despite filling some of the largest pulpits in the denomination.

Parsons' next appointment was Saint Paul's in Newark, New Jersey. After that he was sent to Hanson Place Church, Brooklyn, New York. In 1894, the illness required him to take a year-long medical absence.

Chestnut Street Church in Portland, Maine, the largest Methodist Episcopal Church in New England at that time, gladly received his appointment after his medical leave. While there, he had two surgeries on his neck and brain in order to relieve his constant pain. Unfortunately, the operations failed and Parsons took another medical leave in 1898 instead of traveling to Portland, Oregon, for his next charge.

By 1903, he was back in the proverbial circuit rider saddle and took over the First Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, pulpit for two years. His medical condition considerably worsened so he turned down serving larger churches and settled in at the Grace Church, Plainfield, New Jersey. In the fall of 1907, weak and incapacitated, Parsons left Grace Church and died two months later on December 22.

## Scope Note

The bulk of the Charles Wesley Parsons papers contains letters from Parsons to his wife's cousin, industrialist Henry Marcus Quackenbush of fire arms, kitchen gadgets and spring loaded nutcracker fame. Parsons wrote the letters while living in Fairfield and Watertown during his recuperation period between pastoral appointments. There are references to family life, good and bad, small writing assignments as well as church appointments turned down due to poor health. This, then, leads to the main content of the



letters that document Parsons struggles with the Trigeminal Neuralgia. For those interested in Methodist studies, Parsons strong feelings about the short duration of the local church appointment system and the effects on individual health can have great primary research value. There are two letters written by Emma Parsons to Henry Quackenbush and his second wife, Flora, discussing visits and family life. The rest of the documents give a truncated Parsons family genealogy along with Charles' obituary and church service record. There are a few items on Henry Quackenbush as well.

## Arrangement

Material has been arranged in the following manner. Material is arranged by record type or subject.

## Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding this collection. Copyright still owned by Drew. Permissions to publish must be directed to Drew.

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## Preferred Citation

When citing material from this collection please use the following format: Direct reference to the item or its file folder, Charles Wesley Parsons Papers, Methodist Collection - Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. Do not make use of the items call number as that is not a stable descriptor.

## Index Terms

### *Subject Topics*

Clergy

Family

Illness

### *Subject Geographic*

New York (N.Y.)

### *Genre*

Clippings

Correspondence

Memorials

### *Subject - Personal Names*

Quackenbush, Flora Franks

Quackenbush, Henry Marcus

### *Subject - Corporate Names*

Methodist Episcopal Church

### *Additional Creators - Personal Names*

Parsons, Emma Ford



## **Table of Contents**



## **Container List**

Call Number	Folder Title	Date(s)
2133-5-8:1	Charles Parsons Correspondence	1900-1901
2133-5-8:2	Emma Ford Parsons Correspondence	1900
2133-5-8:3	Parsons Service Record, Obituary and Truncated Family History	1892-1908
2133-5-8:4	Henry Marcus Quackenbush Biographical File	1925-2003

