

The Henry Edson Hersey Papers, 1847 – 1854

Repository: Hingham Public Library
Creator: Henry Edson Hersey
Quantity: 1 oversize document box
Processed by: Bob Malme
Access: Open for Research
Related Materials: Hersey Family Papers

Provenance

These papers were originally created by Henry Edson Hersey (1830-1863) while studying at Harvard and living in Hingham during the late 1840s and early 1850s. This collection was preserved by the Hersey family[??] and donated to the Hingham Public Library in [??].

Biographical Note

Henry Edson Hersey was born in Hingham on May 28, 1830 the son of Captain Stephen and Marcia (Lincoln) Hersey. He attended Derby Academy as a child and then entered Harvard College in 1847. He graduated from Harvard in 1850, honored for his class rank by being chosen to deliver the ceremony's salutatory address. After graduating, he worked as a private tutor while studying law in Boston, later being admitted to the Suffolk Bar in 1854. He established law offices in Hingham and Boston and also found time to serve as a member of the Hingham School Committee, trustee of Derby Academy, and for several years served as superintendent of the Old Ship Meeting House Sunday School. In the fall of 1861 his health began to fail. Seeking a healthier climate, he traveled to Spain and southern France during 1862, however he succumbed to illness on February 24, 1863. He was greatly mourned by all who knew him for his unfulfilled potential and his great and enduring virtues.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is composed of the Harvard class essays, Harvard graduation speech, and several later speech and lecture manuscripts of Henry Edson Hersey (1830-1863). The essays are undated but were written to his tenure at Harvard, 1847-1850, and address topics related to American politics, English history, philosophy and theology. The original order of one folder of essays, as written in an attached note, was "in the order in which they were presented." This applied only to about half of the contents, on blue pages, however, the remainder, on white or lined paper, were listed in alphabetical order, by topic. The lecture speeches include at least two delivered in Hingham. These are listed in chronological order.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into the following series:

- Series I. Harvard Student Essays, 1847-1850
- Series II. Harvard Salutatory Address, 1850
- Series III. Speech and Lecture Manuscripts, 1850-1854

Series I. Harvard Student Essays, 1847 – 1850

Box 1 Folder 1

This series includes 20 student essays written by Henry Edson Hersey while an undergraduate student at Harvard between 1847 and 1850. The undated, hand-written essays often contain comments by the instructors who assigned the essays. The topics of the essays range from Ancient Egypt to American politics of the late 1840's and touch on subjects such as philosophy, psychology, and theology. The essays are in alphabetical order by essay topic. [List of essay titles?]

Series II. Salutatory Address, 1850

Box 1 Folder 2

This series contains the hand-written speech delivered before the Harvard Commencement Exercises for the Class of 1850. Delivered as 'Americanus' the title of the 54 page manuscript is "A Dissertation on the 'History and Resources of the Valley of the Mississippi'" and is written on bound 'Congress Platinum Smith' paper.

Series III. Speech and Lecture Manuscripts, 1850-1854

Box 1 Folders 3-5

This series contains three manuscripts delivered as speeches or lectures, at least two of which took place in Hingham. Folder 3 contains a nine page manuscript, "Athens, Rome and Jerusalem. An English Oration, Spoken at the Exhibition on May 7, 1850." Folder 4 contains a twenty page "Address Delivered before the Sunday School of the First Parish (Old Ship) in Hingham, Sunday November 30, 1851." The topic of the address is "Sunday School: What Does It Mean?" Folder 5 contains a 51 page manuscript entitled "A Lecture on Athens, Rome and Jerusalem, Delivered at Hingham, January 3, 1854." This appears to be a more elaborate speech based on the 1850 speech.