



MS 03: Martha Parsons House Collection

This collection was brought from the Martha Parsons House in 2025. It consists of papers, photos, books, and other materials collected or inherited by Martha Parsons and her family.

Martha Parsons (1869-1965) was a pioneering businesswoman who made her fortune as executive secretary for the New Britain housewares manufacturer Landers, Frary & Clark. She retired in 1919 at the age of 50, and moved home to Enfield to take care of her older sisters Mary (1860-1944) and Juliaette (1855-1942). In 1928 she hired Hartford nurse E. Rebecca Twining (1891-1948) as a live-in nurse and housekeeper, but soon developed a close relationship with her. Martha and "Becky" were inseparable until Twining's untimely death in 1948.

Martha had planned on leaving her 18th century house to the nearby Congregational Church, but a dispute led her to instead leave it to the newly-created Enfield Historical Society instead. The house was maintained as a museum of early American history. Martha died in 1965 and was buried next to her beloved Rebecca in Enfield Street Cemetery.

Parsons had a keen interest in genealogy and local history; she gave several talks on Enfield's past to the D.A.R. chapter in town and did extensive research into her own family history. This collection reflects those passions, including her genealogical research notes and many items from Enfield's early history.

Box 1:

- Photos, many unlabeled. Subjects include Parsons family members, other persons, the house, and Enfield scenes from the late 19th/early 20th centuries.
- Account books for the household likely kept by Martha Parsons. 1921-27, 1933-44. Also contain miscellaneous receipts.
- Receipt/check book, Riverside Trust Co.
- Date Book, 1924 and Reminders, 1924, journals of Martha Parsons's time in California.
- Address books (2)

Box 2:

- Letters, mainly early 19th century. Most are addressed to or were written by members of notable Enfield families such as the Parsons, Potters, and Terrys.
- Small book: Pollock, Robert. *The Course of Time*. 1846.
- Miscellaneous documents: recipes, newspaper clippings, handwritten (original?) unsigned poetry, tickets to Congressional galleries, small cards with sayings, insurance for furniture, typewritten travelogue, post cards and travel memorabilia, and other material. Travelogue, typed. "Trip Through the West in 1915." Informational pamphlet, the Parsons Home Hospital, Springfield.

- Small scrapbook apparently kept by Lucia Wilcox(?) which includes locks of hair labeled as from Orrin Thompson and members of his family.
- Receipts for various goods and services, mostly Enfield and Springfield.
- Copper plate for the creation of calling cards, "Miss Martha Adelia Parsons."

Box 3:

- Written and printed material related to the Congregational church, Enfield history, Enfield Shakers, World War I ambulance, land, and the Parsons House Trust.

Box 4:

- Probate materials, Parsons sisters and Rebecca Twining, the will of Simeon Parsons, other legal matters.
- E. Rebecca Twining material, including letters, cards, receipts, and other items.

Box 5:

- Hazardville Institute stock books and carbon copy of outgoing correspondence.
- Genealogy materials for the Parsons family and related families.

Box 6:

- Enfield Congregational Church, includes a bible, hymnal, scrapbook/notebook possibly kept by a pastor?

Box 7:

- Martha Parsons' scrapbook

Box 8:

- Thomas Alcorn scrapbook, mostly concerning his death and funeral

Box 9:

- Oversize, proclamations concerning Martha Parsons
- Oversize, newspaper on death of Mary Parsons

Box 10:

- Oversize genealogy materials and letters

Box 11:

- Oversize framed photos

Book collection: The books in boxes 12-16 were those that were inscribed by a member of the Parsons household or other Enfield residents. The collection also includes rare books, some from the early to mid-18th century, and works that concern the history of Enfield or Connecticut.

Box 12:

- Holy Bible, 1870
- Caldwell, H.M. *Marcus Aurelius Golden Book*. 1900.
- Unknown. *Discourses on Regeneration*. 1745

- Cunningham, J.W. *De Rancé, a Poem*. 1816.
- Buswell, Leslie. *Ambulance No. 10 Personal Letters from the Front*. 1915.
- Peter, Rockwell Harmon. *Hartford's First Church*. 1932.
- *The Book of Psalms*. 1909.
- Perry, Charles Edward, ed. *Founders and Leaders of Connecticut 1633-1783*. 1934.
- O'Rell, Max. *Jonathan and his Continent*. 1889.
- Holy Bible, 1854.
- *The Christian Monitor*. 1808.
- *Memoirs of the Life and Character of the late Rev. George Atwell*. 1815.
- Sterne, Stuart. *Angels: a Poem*. 1892.
- Howland, S.A. *The Pocket Letter Writer*. 1849.
- Optic, Oliver. *The Little Merchant*. 1864.
- Gallaudet, Rev. T.H. *The Child's Book of Bible Stories*. 1836.
- *A Bridal Gift*. 1846.
- *Books for Children, vol. 1*. n.d.
- *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, n.d.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. n.d.
- Scott, William. *Lessons in Elocutions*. 1795.
- Hooker, Edward W. *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah L. Huntington Smith*. 1845.
- *The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, Jul. 1805-Jun. 1806.
- Olney, J. *The Natural Preceptor or Selections of Prose and Poetry*. 1840.
- Halyburton, Rev. Thomas. *The Great Concern of Salvation*. 1814.
- *A System of Family Duty (sermons)*. 1814.
- Butler, Frederick. *A Catechetical Compend of General History, Sacred and Profane*. 1818.
- Veitch, Agnes. *Woodruff, or Sweetest when Crushed*. 1870.
- Potter, Mary T. *Album*. 1843.
- Field, Eugene. *The Holy Cross*. 1894.
- *The Philipena or Friendship Taken*. 1849.
- More, Hannah. *Colebus in Search of a Wife*. 1837.
- *Proclamations of His Excellency Wilbur L. Cross*. 1937.
- *The Family Exposition v.II, the Latter Part of the History of Christ as Recorded by the Evangelists*. n.d.

Box 13:

- Edwards, John. *The Doctrine of Faith and Justification Set in a True Light*. 1708.
- Allen, Mary Adele. *Around a Village Green*. 1939.
- Burton, Malcolm K. *Destiny for Congregationalism*. 1953. (2 copies)
- Barber, Jonhn Warner. *Connecticut Historical Collection*. 1836.
- [book, title page missing, religious writings, possibly 18th century]
- [book, title page missing, religious writings, possibly 19th century]
- Brainard, Harvey, printer. *The World War Veterans of Enfield, Connecticut, 1917-1919*. 1919.
- Meyer, F. Russell. *A History of God's Standing Order Church in Enfield*. 1973.
- Allen, Orrin Peer. *The Allen Memorial – Descendants of Samuel Allen of Windsor, Connecticut*. 1907.
- Best, Frank E. *John Keep of Longmeadow, Massachusetts and his Descendants*. 1899.
- Abbe, Cleveland and Nichols, Josephine George. *Abbe-Abbey Genealogy*. 1916.

Box 14:

- Appointment certificate from Gov. Oliver Wolcott to Captain Jabez King, Jr., to be captain of the First Flank Co., 19th Regiment, CT State Militia. May 30, 1826.
- Map of Enfield, 1956
- *Towns of Connecticut [excerpts from Women's History]* published by the Hartford Courant, 1964.
- Robeson, Paul. *Ballad for Americans* [recording]. Contains written program for concert in Enfield, 1942.
- Abbey Memorial Book, 1916.
- Photo: School at corner of Enfield Street and Brainard, c.1880
- Sheldon, Franklin J. *Nonsense, Common Sense, Incense*. 1925-6.
- Sheldon, Franklin J. *A Sketch of Enfield Rapids of Connecticut River*. Feb. 1915.
- Robeson, Eslanda Goode. *African Journey*. 1945
- Connecticut Quarterly magazines: Oct/Nov/Dec 1896, Oct/Nov/Dec 1897
- Photos: Chilson house, Post Office Rd.
- Comporetto, Charles J. *Hazardville's Powder Hollow*. 1985.

Box 15:

- Phelps, E. Stuart. *I Don't Know How*. 1867.
- Fosdick, Harry Emerson. *The Meaning of Prayer*. 1919.
- Cooley, Timothy Mather. *Sketches of the Life and Character of the Rev. Lemuel Haynes, A.M.* 1839.
- Rostand, Edmond. *L'Aiglon*. Translated by Louis N. Parker, 1900.
- Unknown. *Great Things Done by Little People*. 1867.
- Wilson, Sara W. and Hussey, Martha S. *Helps by the Way*. 1886.
- Holy Bible, revised edition. Oxford, 1892.
- Holy Bible, Oxford. N.d.
- Holy Bible, 1857.
- Scott, Sir Walter. *Lady of the Lake*. n.d.
- Northern California Congregational Conference. *Daily Devotions: the Valor of the Soul*. Third series. n.d.
- Bible, no cover. 1752?
- Ebers, Georg. *Joshua: A Story of Biblical Times*. 1890.
- Bible. 1878.
- Robinson, Charles. *Spiritual Songs for Church and Choir*. 1878.
- *Comparative New Testament: Old and New Versions Arranged by Parallel Columns*. 1881.
- *The Church Hymnary and Psalter*. 1892.
- Handwritten poem? Unknown.

Box 16:

- Gardner, James. *Medieval Towns: The Story of Siena and San Gimignano*. 1904.
- Warren, D.M. *An Elementary Treatise on Physical Geography, to which is added a Brief Description of the Physical Phenomena of the United States*. 1873.
- Bible, 1828.
- Walker, John. *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language*. 1827.
- Bible, undated.
- *The Pleasures of Memory in two parts, with some other Poems*. 1795.
- Parley, Peter. *The First Book of History for Children and Youth*. 4th ed. 1849.

- Watts, Isaac, *The Psalms of David, imitated to the language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian State and Worship, together with Hymns and Spiritual Songs, in Three Books.* 1791.
- Abbott, Jacob. *The Sea Shore; or, how to plan pic-nics and excursions.* 1863.
- Scott, Thomas. *The Force of Truth: an authentic narrative.* 1819.
- American Sunday School Union. *Union Bible Dictionary.* 1855.
- Pike, J.G. *A Guide for Young Disciples of the Holy Savior in their Way to Immortality.* n.d.
- Bible, 1855.
- Backus, Charles. *Five Discourses on the Truth and Inspiration of the Bible.* Hartford, 1797.
- Marvel, Ik. *Dream Life.*
- Lossing, Benson J. *The Pictorial Field Book of the Civil War in America, v.1.* 1876.
- Lowman, Moses. *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John.* Second ed. 1745.
- Fisk, George. *A Memorial of Egypt, the Red Sea, the Wilderness of Sin and Paran, Mount Sinai, Jerusalem, and other principal locations of the Holy Land.* 1848.
- Bible, 1827.
- *Sermons by the Late Rev. Joseph Lathrop, D.D.* 1821.
- Van Dyke, Henry. *The Spirit of Christmas.* 1905.
- *Songs for the Sanctuary, Hymns and Tunes.* 1874.

Box 17:

- Mary E. Parsons scrapbooks:
 - v. 1 1901-2
 - v. 2 1900-1902
 - v. 3 1904-5
 - v. 4 1906-8
 - v.5 1908-10
 - v.6 1910-12
 - v.7 1913-17
- Post Cards, four albums

Box 18:

- Green scrapbook, containing post cards, news clippings, information, and other material concerning travel to the American West and other points during the early 20th century. Likely kept by Martha Parsons.
- Two scrapbooks with clippings and other material from the 1800s pasted over ledgers from the late 1700s.
- Scrapbook, mostly about Connecticut and current events of the early 20th century.