



Porter School and Porter Family Collection
1868-1945

Collection 206

Champaign County Historical Archives

Compiled by: Christine Willson

Creator/Corporate name: Loring Porter and Porter School

Inclusive Dates: 1868-1945, bulk 1868-1935

Physical Description: 5 boxes, 3.1 linear feet

Provenance:

The Porter School Collection was donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives in two accessions. The record books for Porter School were donated in December of 2014 (2014-0028) and the diaries and photographs were donated in May of 2015 (2015-0022), both by David and Mary Porter. The deed of gift was signed on June 15, 2015.

Access:

The records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

Biographical/Historical Note:

The diaries, photographs, and record books in the collection were created and preserved by the Porter family, most notably the patriarch, L. H. Porter. Loring Hanger Porter was born in Gallia County, Ohio on November 5, 1845, and moved to Illinois in 1859. In 1871, L. H. Porter married Mary Philbrook. They and their children, Mary, Edwin, Robert, Bertha, Cora, Luther, Arthur, Annie, Fred, and Wilbur, moved to Champaign County and lived on a homestead in section 8 of Somer Township. Although L. H. Porter was known as a talented stock breeder, he also served as the postmaster and director of the school that bore his name, being elected to the latter position on April 23, 1898. The administrative records were created by members of the Porter School Board of Directors as well as the teachers, who filled in the reports on their students annually. For more information about the Porter family, see the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Champaign County* (1887). For a map of Somer Township in 1930 that includes the Porter's land and the school, see *Materials on One-Room Schools in Champaign County* by Barbara Roberts.

The Porter School, located in Somer Township, was one of the original one-room schoolhouses in Illinois. It took its name from the Porter Farm adjacent to the school. The school most likely opened its doors in the 1880s or 1890s; the first known photo of the school was taken in 1893. The Porter School burned down in 1934 when the stove malfunctioned.

Scope and Content Note:

The Porter School and Porter Family Collection spans the years 1869-1945 and falls into two categories: the personal materials of the Porter family, primarily Loring H. Porter, in the form of diaries and photographs, and the records and books related to the school in Somer Township.



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Loring Porter kept the journals in this collection between the years of 1869-1935, with one journal written almost every year. Within these journals he recorded the weather and his daily activities, with the exception of the 1935 journal where someone else recorded the events leading up to his death. Within the pages of many of the journals there are notes and bank checks written by or to Loring H. Porter. The collection also contains three small notebooks kept by Loring H. Porter.

This collection contains photographs of various sizes and formats of the Porter family. Some of these photos are labeled with names and dates but most are not. The collection also contains a photo album with twelve photos of people who are probably Porter family members.

This collection contains five ledger books from the Porter School that document the school records from 1911-1941 and 1944-1945 and two School District Record Books that document the activities of the school board from 1888-1916 and 1918-1928. The collection also contains four books from 1903-1928 used by the Porter School students: *The Hoosier School Master*, *Cudjo's Cave*, *The White Indian Boy*, and *Literature and Living Book 2*.

Arrangement:

This collection is organized into three series: Loring Porter Journals (1869-1935), School Record Books (1888-1945), and Photographs (circa 1870-1935).

Name Terms:

Porter, Loring H.

Subject Terms:

One-room schools
Porter School (Somerset Township, Ill.)
Rural schools
Schools
Somerset (Ill. : Township)

Container List:

Box 1

Series 1: Diaries of L.H. Porter

Folder 1: Book 1, 1869
Book 4, 1874
Folder 2: Book 2, 1871
Book 3, 1873
Book 5, 1876
Folder 3: Book 6, 1877
Book 7, 1878
Book 8, 1880
Folder 4: Book 9, 1881



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- Book 10, 1882
- Book 11, 1883
- Folder 5: Book 12, 1884
- Book 13, 1885
- Book 14, 1886
- Folder 6: Book 15, 1887
- Book 16, 1888
- Book 17, 1889
- Folder 7: Book 18, 1890
- Book 19, 1891
- Book 20, 1892

Box 2

Series 1: Diaries of L.H. Porter (continued)

- Folder 8: Book 21, 1893
- Book 22, 1894
- Book 23, 1895
- Folder 9: Book 24, 1896
- Book 25, 1897
- Book 26, 1898
- Book 27, 1899
- Folder 10: Book 28, 1900
- Book 29, 1901
- Book 30, 1902
- Folder 11: Book 31, 1903
- Book 32, 1904
- Book 33, 1905
- Folder 12: Book 34, 1906
- Book 35, 1907
- Book 36, 1908
- Folder 13: Book 37, 1909
- Book 38, 1910
- Book 39, 1911
- Folder 14: Book 40, 1912
- Book 41, 1913
- Book 42, 1914

Box 3

Series 1: Diaries of L.H. Porter (continued)

- Folder 15: Book 43, 1915
- Book 44, 1916
- Book 45, 1917
- Folder 16: Book 46, 1918
- Book 47, 1919
- Book 48, 1920



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Folder 17: Book 49, 1921

Book 50, 1922

Book 51, 1923

Folder 18: Book 52, 1924

Book 53, 1925

Book 54, 1927

Folder 19: Book 55, 1928

Book 56, 1932

Book 57, 1933

Folder 20: Book 58, 1934

Book 59, 1935

Folder 21: Book 60, 1890

Book 61, 1895-1896

Book 62, 1899-1903

Book 63, 1906-1909

Box 4

Series 2: Porter Family Photos

3 Photo envelopes

1 Panorama: 1919 Porter family 15th reunion

Series 3: Books

4 schoolbooks owned by the Porter School

Box 5

Oversized

Series 2: Porter Family Photos (continued)

2 family photos

Series 4: School Records

7 school ledgers, 1898-1941