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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.JOHNSONO
Title  Johnson, Oliver. Collection
Date  1879-1881
Size  0.25 linear feet (1 box)
Repository  Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Oliver Johnson (1809-1889) American abolitionist and avid follower of fellow abolitionist and social reformer William Lloyd Garrison. The collection includes letters sent by Johnson to Garrison’s sons, Francis Jackson Garrison, and “William,” presumed to be Garrison’s namesake son, William Lloyd Garrison II, regarding the biography Johnson wrote about Garrison.

Information on Use

Access
The collection is open for research.

Citation
When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Johnson, Oliver. Collection, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Oliver Johnson’s role in the abolitionist efforts of mid- to late-19th century America occurred largely in the background of the more well-known faces of the movement, such as William Lloyd Garrison. Johnson was born on December 27, 1809, in Peacham, VT to Ziba Johnson and Sally Lincoln. Johnson had five siblings, the most famous of which was perhaps Leonard Johnson who went on to support the abolitionist movement by reportedly using his home as a way station for the Underground Railroad. He was educated at the Peacham Academy and received further tutoring in religious studies from his father. In Boston, on September 8, 1832, Johnson married Mary Anne White.

Johnson’s adult life saw a joining of his political passion with his Quaker beliefs, and he became involved in a number of social reformation movements, including abolition, women’s suffrage, and others. Johnson eventually became the aide and follower of William Lloyd Garrison.
Johnson also supported the campaign of the democratic nominee for the 1872 US presidential election, Horace Greenley. Johnson died on the 10th of December, 1889 in New York.

**Scope Note**

The Oliver Johnson contains five letters – four letters to “Frank” (Francis Jackson Garrison) and one letter to William (Garrison’s son, William Lloyd Garrison II). The letter date from 1879 to 1881. All letters refer to Johnson’s biography of Garrison, though the topics range to include a speech of William’s that appeared in The Women’s Journal, as well as personal information, such as Frank’s marriage.

The collection was previously part of the Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection.

**Subject Headings**

- Johnson, Oliver, 1809-1889
- Garrison, Francis Jackson, 1848-1916
- Garrison, William Lloyd, 1805-1879

**INVENTORY**

Box 1

Folder 1

Correspondence, 1879-1881

- Letter from Oliver Johnson to Francis Jackson Garrison, June 20, 1879
- Letter from Oliver Johnson to Francis Jackson Garrison, July 8, 1879
- Letter from Oliver Johnson to Francis Jackson Garrison, July 30, 1879
- Letter from Oliver Johnson to Francis Jackson Garrison, May 13, 1880
- Letter from Oliver Johnson to William Lloyd Garrison II, November 25, 1881