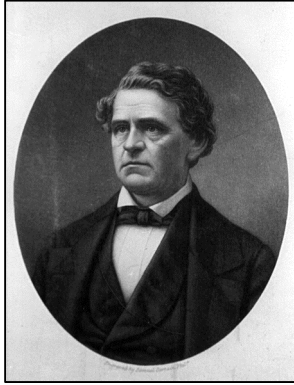


Guide to the Ovid Butler Collection

Special Collections and Rare Books, Irwin Library, Butler University



Contact Information:

Special Collections and Rare Books
Irwin Library
Butler University
4600 Sunset Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46208-3485 USA
Phone: 317.940.9265
Fax: 317.940.8039
E-mail: schildsh@butler.edu
URL: <http://www.butler.edu/library/libinfo/rare/>

Summary

Volume of Collection

One manuscript box, one oversize folder

Collection Dates

1818–1999

Provenance

Butler University

Restrictions

None

Copyright

Butler University

Citation

Ovid Butler Collection, Special Collections and Rare Books, Irwin Library,
Butler University

Related Collections

Board of Commissioners, letter books, 1852–60
Minutes of the Board of Commissioners, March 5, 1850–June 23, 1852
Ovid Butler letter book

Biographical Sketch

Ovid Butler was an Indianapolis lawyer, philanthropist, and founder of North Western Christian University (today's Butler University). Born February 7, 1801, in Augusta, New York, Butler moved with his family to Indiana in 1817. After practicing law in Shelbyville from 1825 to 1836, Butler moved to Indianapolis where he practiced law until 1849. His law partner of eleven years, Calvin Fletcher, considered himself blessed to have such a partner, and called Butler "a man of strict integrity great dilligence & integrity" (*Diary of Calvin Fletcher*, vol. 3, p. 198, Saturday, October 11, 1845). Although ill health led Butler to retire from his law practice in 1849, his involvement in a variety of civic causes continued.

Butler was an active supporter of the antislavery movement. In 1848 he was elected as vice president of Indiana's Free Soil Party, and backed the *Free Soil Banner*, a campaign paper for the party. In addition to his efforts on behalf of the antislavery cause, Butler was a leader in education. His desire to found and maintain a university dedicated to nonsectarian Christianity was a driving force in the creation of North Western Christian University.

Following the Indiana General Assembly's approval of the school's charter on 15 January 1850, Butler was among those who worked to raise the \$75,000 in stocks necessary for the opening of the school. Five years later North Western Christian University opened its doors, and in 1856 graduated its first class. Butler served as the president of the school's board of directors until 1871, when he retired due to poor health and advanced age. In recognition of his service to the university, the board created the special office of chancellor for Butler, which he held until his death in 1881. In 1877 the school was renamed in his honor.

Scope and Content

This collection contains a variety of materials relating to Ovid Butler, the Butler family, and North Western Christian University ranging in date from 1818 to 1992. Secondary items include biographical sketches, genealogical notes, and copies of cemetery records, while primary materials include letters and writings of Ovid Butler, letters to Butler, letters about various family members, and material relating to North Western Christian University. The collection is organized in the following series: biographical information, correspondence (originals and copies), and North Western Christian University. Within each series, the items are arranged chronologically where appropriate.

Container List

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	Ovid Butler: biographical sketches, genealogical notes, pictures, Founder's Day addresses, 1916–61, undated
	2	Butler family: biographical notes, 1954–92, undated
	3	"The Butler Family," by Emily M. Helming, 1953–54
	4	Butler family: genealogical notes and articles, misc. correspondence concerning Ovid Butler's descendants, genealogical notes, and Butler family residences, 1966
	5	Butler family: McAllister family chart, 1991, undated
	6	Butler family: correspondence between E. M. Goodwin and Fred C. Lockwood concerning family history, Lockwood account of Butler family history, 1936, 1943
	7	Butler family: cemetery records, undated
	8	Butler family: photographs, undated
	9	Butler family: residences, family history in Jennings County, undated
	10	Butler family: newspaper clippings, photocopies about family residences, 1943–88
	11	Correspondence: transcripts of letters by Ovid Butler, September 24, 1852 to Wm. Tinsley, and October 2, 1853, to Horace Mann
	12	Correspondence: transcripts of letters by Ovid Butler, prepared by Steven Schmidt, undated
	13	Correspondence: originals, Ovid Butler to Chancy Butler, October 3, 1819; transcript of exchange between Ovid Butler and Cordelia Cole (original stored in large case, framed)
	14	Correspondence: E. F. Pabody and Ovid Butler, July 8, 1825, December 13, 1846, as well as correspondence concerning donation, April–May 1960
	15	Correspondence: Bulk from E. F. Pabody to Ovid Butler, 1818–54
	16	North Western Christian University: "By-laws of the Board of Directors of North Western Christian University, "1850
	17	North Western Christian University: "An Act to Incorporate the North Western Christian University," 1850, second copy, 1852