

The Arthur D. Jordan Collection consists of 31 letters, invitations, news clippings, and fraternity publications ranging in dates from 1882-1886 and all addressed to Arthur D. Jordan, a student at Illinois Wesleyan University in the late nineteenth century. These items provide valuable information about the history of Illinois Wesleyan and the fraternity Phi Delta Theta, as well as life in Central Illinois and at IWU during the 1880s.

Six of the letters is correspondence between Arthur and several fraternity brothers. One set of letters contains a request from a fraternity brother in Galesburg for copies of Phi Delta Theta's Senate records so that he might use those as a model for the new chapter being created in Galesburg. Several others are similarly business-like, from chapters in Indiana and New York, but two of these letters are from Arthur's fellow Phi Delta Theta brothers, written to him after they had graduated and wanting to hear the news of the fraternity and of I.W.U.

A four-page letter dating from 1886 is from a male friend from Chenoa who does not seem to have ever attended Wesleyan and whose full name is unknown, although he does refer to himself as "Henry" in his writings. He is writing to Arthur after the latter left Illinois Wesleyan and moved to Chicago. He gives Arthur information about all their friends in Chenoa and the surrounding areas, many of whom had recently died or were seriously ill from fever, farm accidents, or childbirth. He describes business in Chenoa as being "unusually dull" and says that the local businessmen had organized a "Merchants' Protection Association." He goes into some detail regarding personal relationships and love affairs between himself and several of their friends from Chenoa. He describes a bumpy winter sleigh ride to a "literary" in Icoya, at which the attendants debated the topic: "Resolved: That the Negro has suffered greater persecutions at the hands of the whites than the Indian." This particular letter is outstanding in its detail, its intimacy, and its depiction of late nineteenth century life in rural McLean County.

The only letter written to Arthur by an unrelated female is from one Cora E. M., who was a classmate of Arthur's either from Chenoa or from IWU. She insists that he "orate" for them at some event she is planning, and goes into detail concerning the cast of the operetta she is planning – "Little Red Riding Hood."

A majority of the letters written to Arthur were sent to him in Chicago by his family downstate: His father, R.G. Jordan; his sister, Abbie, and one other family member. His father tells him about all the events and purchases happening at their farm in Chenoa, and sends him bi-monthly checks for \$25. His sister was writing to him from Bloomington, where she was staying in order to see a doctor. Her whole family is seriously ill, she writes in almost every letter, and she herself has "the rheumatism and the headache." Abbie Jordan was also an IWU student, although she makes no mention of the school. The other family member writing to Arthur was either his sister, Mollie, or, more likely, his mother. The letter is signed "M. Jordan."

The rest of the collection consists of miscellaneous invitations and news clippings. The IWU invitations include the fifth anniversary of Phi Delta Theta, an open session of Kappa Alpha Theta, a social at Munsellian Hall, and a picnic at "Boyle's Grove" (this invitation was sent, interestingly, by Grace S. Funk). The other invitations include a class-meeting at Cora's house, a "Leap Year Party" at Society Hall (probably in Chenoa), a Bloomington High School Graduation Party, a University of Nebraska commencement ceremony, a Chicago Medical College commencement ceremony, and an

invitation to a Chicago Philosophical Society meeting, with Mrs. Frank Truedell lecturing.

Also included are two newspaper clippings from 1882, including one from the *Northwestern*. It is a rather anti-immigrant opinion piece glorifying the morality of the United States (The U.S. is moral, the article states, once the “infidels, papists, paupers, and criminals” are “assimilated and reformed”), and another opinion letter entitled “Some Sins of Capital”.

The final two items in the collection are a subscription solicitation from “The Scroll”, a fraternity newsletter, and a semi-annual report from the Vermont Alpha chapter.