

# **Finding Aid for the John W. Champlin papers Collection 171**

**Finding aid prepared by Michael Hoffman**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department  
March 1994  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
<b>Creator</b>	Champlin, John W, 1831-1901
<b>Title</b>	John W. Champlin papers
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1861-1893
<b>Extent</b>	2.3 Linear feet Two boxes
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>John W. Champlin (1831-1901) was a lawyer and a justice of the Michigan Supreme Court. The papers include Civil War letters between Champlin and his brother, Brigadier General Stephen G. Champlin (1827-1864) as well as other documents concerning the General's military career. Also included are speeches and lectures given by John Champlin and correspondence relating to Champlin's experiences with Jay Gould.</p>

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## Biographical/Historical note

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At 23, John W. Champlin (1831-1901) came to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where his brother, Stephen G. Champlin practiced law. John Champlin studied law in his brother's office, passing his examination before Judge Martin in 1855. In 1856, John Champlin was chosen to prepare a revision of the Grand Rapids City Charter. At different times, Champlin served as City Recorder, City Attorney and Mayor. He was elected to the State Supreme Court in 1883. The University of Michigan conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1887. He ended his career as a lecturer at the University of Michigan.

Stephen G. Champlin (1827-1864) was a prominent lawyer in Grand Rapids. Born in Kingston, New York, Champlin came to Grand Rapids in 1853 and entered into a partnership with Lucius Patterson. In 1856, Champlin was elected Judge of the Recorders Court of Grand Rapids. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Champlin enlisted in the Third Michigan Volunteer Infantry. On May 13, 1861, he received a commission as a Major in that regiment; on October 28, 1861, was promoted to the rank of Colonel and put in command of the Third Michigan Infantry. At the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, Champlin was severely wounded. Champlin was promoted to Brigadier General on November 29, 1862, but never returned to active field command. Champlin died on January 24, 1864, in his home on Front St. in Grand Rapids.

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## Scope and Contents note

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Included in this collection are ten letters and one resolution. Seven are correspondence during the Civil War. Three of these are between the John W. Champlin (1831-1901) in Grand Rapids, Michigan and his brother, Stephen G. Champlin (1827-1864) written in 1861. One of these also contains correspondence between John Champlin and W.H. Connell. The remaining Civil War letters document the military career of Stephen G. Champlin, including letters of reference and a resolution from the Kent Co. Board of Supervisors honoring Brigadier General S.G. Champlin for his war services. The two remaining letters in the collection include a written request to John W. Champlin, by S.B. Champion of the Stamford (Conn.?) Mirror, Feb. 1893, for confirmation of facts relating to the early life of U.S. financier Jay Gould. Enclosed with editor Champion's letter is a letter for publication from Wm. Zawadill, refuting Gould's claim of authorship of the 1854 map of Delaware County, published by Robert P. Smith of Philadelphia.

Added to the collection in June 2000, are the petition, the speeches, the clippings, and the receipts. One speech is written on the back of letterhead for Champlin & Stone.

## Arrangement note

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Correspondence is arranged chronologically. The speeches, which are undated, are arranged alphabetically by assigned title.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department March 1994

### Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Unknown, formerly C1:A1.8 (accession number 00.000)

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Genre(s)

- letters (correspondence)

### Personal Name(s)

- Champlin, John W, 1831-1901
- Champlin, Stephen G, 1827-1864

### Subject(s)

- **United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865**

## Correspondence

## Collection Inventory

Correspondence		
	Box	Folder
J.W. Champion to S.G. Champlin, 3 July 1861	1	1
A.A.G.S. Williams to Brig.Gen. I.B. Richardson, RE S.G. Champlin, 5 September 1861. Reprinted in the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series 1, Vol. 5, p. 121.	1	2
W.H. McConnell to J.W. Champlin, 11 September 1861 and also J.W. Champlin to S.G. Champlin, Oct. 10, 1861. S.G. Champlin to J.W. Champlin, 10 October 1861.	1	3
J.W. Champlin to S.G. Champlin, n.d.	1	4
F.R. Mesthuk(?) to Ira Harris, RE S.G. Champlin, 18 December 1862.	1	5
Bryon R. Pierce to S.G. Champlin, 4 January 1863.	1	6
Letter and Resolution - P.R.S. Pierce, Kent Co. Clerk & Board of Supervisors, to Mrs. S.G. Champlin, January 1864.	1	7
S.B. Champion to J.W. Champlin, 20 February 1893, plus Wm. Zawadills to S.B. Champion, undated.	1	8

## Personal Papers

<b>Personal Papers</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Wesleyan Female College (Hamilton, Ontario) Receipts, 1873-1874, Re: "Miss Champlin" [Daughter Education?]	1	9
<b>Legal Briefs</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Boundaries, Resurvey, n.d. (ca. 1892?)	1	10
<b>Speeches/Lectures</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
[Congressional History of Duties on Spirits, 1789-1794]	1	11
[Decoration Day Address?/States Rights]	1	12
Esoteric Work, Grand Lodge, n.d.	1	13
[Flag Presentation]	1	14
[Grand Rapids history, 1822-1895, including summary (1 sheet), draft (10 sheets), clipped/annotated (8 sheets.)]	1	15
Honors Are Mutual, n.d.	1	16



## Clippings

[In Memory of General Grant]	1	17
[Insurance Co. Directors]	1	18
Treaty of 1836	1	19
<b>Clippings</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Small Clippings	1	20
Oversized	2	1
<b>Petition</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
To Charles Lyon, from Members of Company K, 3rd RMI, to refuse appointed of command, Oct. 30, 1861? Or 1869.	2	1
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		
Signatures (best guess): George T. Joslin, Herrman I. Kusig, John Eadie, Sidney Fox, Henry C. Whitford, Harvey H. Mead, James C. Danahue, William Monroe, Elbert Chase, Robert Sligh (his mark), Josephman(?) Moe Warren, E.D. Bugbee, Chandler Andrews, Orange McGuns?(his mark), Virgil Mcmuillon, Martin Nelson, John J. Powley, Elias Judd, William B. Willey, Chas. B. Anderson, David Kernahan(?), Frederic L. Barker, Issac(?) N. Whitney, Reuben Tower(?), Samuel F. Priees(?), William Halrey, John ? , William H. Baird, James C. Jones, L.W. Payne, Bengman C. Gardner (his mark), Charles E. Henry, Riley		

Petition

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Smith, Oliver Mculver, Elius A. Snider, Alexander French, Mortinnin(?)  
Millard, A.M.Hill, William Breck, William J. Haney, Orlin A. Antrus,  
John M. Brown, Fernando Paye, George Powers, Henry P. Beckwith,  
Jesse Coon, David Essmond, W.W. Dickinson, Orin R. Newton, Benjamin  
Carpenter, Warren G. Hill, C.C. Bailey, Jonathan Kelley, Thos. L. Howe  
(his mark), A. McIntire, George W. Culver, Joseph E. Knapp, Danny  
Hannia, John McAllister, Robert Misner, Chas. W. Furbos, James H.  
Misner, John W. Whittaker, John Shaw, George ?, Stephen Mclenithan,  
William Frinelle, Ashley O. Snegles, Lyman Crandall, Cyrus W. Ballen,  
John D. Oneill, Charles Eddy, Alfred Felton, Avah Bonney, Henry  
E. Kingsbury, ? M. Reed, William Powell, W.G. Wilinon, Edwin H.  
Mallory.