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Finding aid for the Maxine Sowerby genealogical collection Collection 485

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

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

URL: <http://www.grpl.org>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Title:	Maxine Sowerby genealogical collection
ID:	Collection 485
Date [inclusive]:	1970-1999
Physical Description:	6 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Maxine Sowerby Genealogical Collection reflects years of research collected around a handful of families pertinent to the donor, Maxine Sowerby of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The research was collected in the late 20th century, but traces families back many years using family trees, printed genealogical research, scrapbooks, original photos, certificates, diaries, newspaper clippings, and other types of ephemera. Perhaps the most notable ancestor researched in the collection is Leo Salkeld Sowerby (1895-1968), a celebrated church musician and Pulitzer Prize winning composer. Information about Grand Rapids and some outlying areas in West Michigan (Rockford, Montcalm County, Greenville) are highlighted in this collection.

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Biographical / Historical

This collection contains four large boxes of material that could be used to research a number of families that lived in the West Michigan area (primarily Grand Rapids, Rockford, and Montcalm County) in the late 19th century and early 20th century. A researcher interested in learning more about the family origins of these families will discover a trove of information, primarily in the form of printed research and other ephemera, including original family photographs. Each family has a binder or more dedicated to its surname; the research is contained in binders and includes ancestry sheets and family trees.

This is a partial list of the primary families featured in this collection: Sowerby; Salkeld; Haines-Barkley; Richmond-Weeks; Jewel; Crandall-Nutter; Downey; Jewell; Allen-Rice-Rounds; Gaston; Cadwell; Richmond; Hill; Smith-Sowerby.

The donor, Maxine Sowerby (b. circa 1920), has lived most of her life in Michigan. She married Keith C. Sowerby in 1945. She has been active in numerous societies and associations, including the McKenzie

Memorial Hospital Association (Sandusky), local and district United Methodist churches, and the Clark Retirement Community.

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Scope and Contents

This collection contains material in the following formats and of the following nature: printed family genealogy research from aforementioned families; original family photos; genealogical conference notes and information; correspondence and bills regarding genealogy; family scrapbooks; diaries (written by Ruth Whitright Sowerby); the Sowerby family crest on a wood block; cemetery records, including photos of gravesites and gravestone rubbings; newspaper clippings of prominent musicians; other ephemera, including a poem ("Keith Sowerby"); serials such as "The Birthday Book", the 4-H Dairy Club Record; Potato Club Record; and newsletters from the Leo Sowerby Foundation, related to one ancestor of particular note (as described in the following paragraph).

One ancestor of note is Leo Salkeld Sowerby. Leo Sowerby (1895-1968), born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, was an American composer and church musician. He attended Central High School in Grand Rapids and later studied composition at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. He also spent time in France During World War I as a bandmaster. Sowerby was the first composer to be awarded the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome (1921). The cantata he wrote in 1944, "Canticle of the Sun" won him the Pulitzer Prize for music (1946). His legacy as a musician includes more than 500 works. Sowerby was called the "Dean of American church music" in the early to mid 20th century.

Additionally, information about Ellis Crandall is included in the research. Ellis Crandall was a violin maker in Rockford. He is related to Keith Sowerby, who is a descendant of Freeman Addision (an ancestor of Flat River valley, currently Greenville Michigan).

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Maxine Sowerby, 2006.109

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Controlled Access Headings

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- Genealogy
- Sowerby, Leo
- Mountcalm County (Mich) -- Genealogy
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- Maxine Sowerby

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Binder: Gaston Cadwell Castle Families. Printed genealogy research.	Box 1
Binder: Crandall Nutter Families. A scrapbook with genealogy materials. Includes original photos, original documents (marriage license, certificates, letter, clippings, and photocopies). Ellis Crandall was a violin maker. Rockford, Michigan. Wonderland Oct 13, 1985. Tractor Tales.	Box 1
Binder: Robert Smith Sowerby Families. Numerous family images, some ephemera, as well as genealogical materials.	Box 1
Binder: Allen Rice Round Families. Contains printed genealogy materials.	Box 1
Binder: Richmond, Hill, Weeks Families. Contains homemade scrapbook. Includes "When Kent County was Young: memories of the Red School House Built on Knapp Road in 1851 and still in use" by Stella Richmond Hill. Contains a scrapbook with select newspaper clippings. Binder includes original photos, certificates, Bible lists, and genealogy or photocopies of clippings.	Box 1
Folder: Envelope with a printed sticker with the imprint of the plate. Contents include correspondence and bills about Sowerby genealogy.	Box 1
Photos of 3 boys (Robert M, Keith C. (the donor's husband), and Martin B. Sowerby; typed list "This Birthday Book" owned by Bessie Jewell Crandall.	Box 1

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Folder: Sowerby – England	Box 1
Folder: Salkeld – England	Box 1
Binder: Jewel Family. Includes mostly genealogy family trees: Crandall-Nutter-Downey-Jewell-Allen-Rice-Rounds. Contains original photos and clippings, and many photocopies.	Box 2
Binder: Haines Barkley Family. Contains genealogy lists, trees, and photocopies; Original letter and original clippings.	Box 2
Binder: Maurice Sowerby. Includes Clark Retirement Chapel Program. Includes some original photos, certificates, materials on Montcalm County.	Box 2
Folder: "Woodacres" envelope with genealogical materials. Sowerby Smith Ivinson Salkeld Haines Wilkinson Barkley Crawford Addis Arthur Crawford Richmond Gaston Cadwell Hayden Castle and cousin charts.	Box 2
Folder with cemetery rubbings.	Box 2
Binder: Family photos, including Maxine Crandall Sowerby's wedding. Daughter of Ellis Crandall, violin maker?	Box 3
Binder: Cemetery records, including original pictures of gravestones.	Box 3
Binder: genealogy seminar, Montcalm Community College.	Box 3
Binder: Sowerby William John Thomas. Tombstone rubs. Genealogical documents, some correspondence, a couple of original photos. The American Organist, May 1995. Leo Sowerby, 1895-1968.	Box 3
Binder: Thomas T.F. and Ruth Sowerby. History. Transcribed notes or diaries by Ruth Whitright Sowerby.	Box 3
Binder: Rockford Register citations.	Box 3
Folder: Letter with Sowerby shield stickers and drawing. Coat of arms booklet.	Box 3
Loose item: Sowerby Crest wood printing block in Yardley soap box.	Box 3
3 ring binder: Genealogy of Haines-Barkley Families; Richmond-Weeks Families; Original Sowerby Family pictures. Includes family musicians in the news, newspaper clippings, ephemera, original photos.	Box 4
Binder: Keith Sowerby Family. Includes certificate – Keith Sowerby is a descendant of Freeman Addison, ancestor of Flat River Valley (Greenville Michigan). Anniversary Program, Heritage Day Dinner (20th anniversary). Includes two graph paper maps of the farmstead, and a planting plan, folded in a manila folder, plus a poem "Keith Sowerby" responding to a call by Bill Harrison. Envelope with Dairy Club Record, 1930s (4-H), Potato club record.	Box 4

Binder has some original photos, clippings, MSU (Michigan State University) materials, city of Sandusky, Michigan Dairyland publication; obituary on Keith Sowerby. Box 4

Binder: genealogical charts. Certificate for Nancy Sowerby Peck in recognition of the contribution of a pioneer ancestor, Michigan's Sesquicentennial Pioneer Certification. Aug 5 1987. Library of Michigan and Michigan Genealogical Council. Box 4

Folder: Photocopied information on Leo Sowerby. Original Funeral program from October 19, 1968. Original programs. The Leo Sowerby Foundation newsletter, first issue June 1993 and a May 1, 1995 issue. Box 4

Folder: Photocopied information on Leo Sowerby. Box 4