

Beloit College Archives

Guide to the Jackson J. Bushnell Papers

MC 28

Unique ID:	us-wbb-MC028
Repository:	Beloit College Archives
Collection Title:	Jackson J. Bushnell papers
Creator:	Jackson J. Bushnell
Date (inclusive):	1832-1966, bulk 1854-1873
Extent:	0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)
Access Note:	This collection is open for research; however, certain materials are fragile and require Archives staff for handling, or use may be restricted altogether.
Language:	English
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Abstract:	Jackson J. Bushnell was a one of the first faculty members of Beloit College and taught mathematics and natural philosophy from 1848-1873. This collection contains correspondence, news articles, photographs, a diary, and other documents pertaining to or written by Bushnell, and they span from the 1830s (before his time at Beloit College) to well after his death. There are also a number of materials related to the contents of the collection itself and about and by various members of his family.

*This finding aid was completed in January, 2013 by Michelle Tom.
Contents of finding aid are subject to changes and updates as necessary.*

Biographical Note

Excerpt from: The United States Biographical Dictionary (NY 1877)

Jackson Jones Bushnell, a native of Old Saybrook, Connecticut, was born on the 19th of February, 1815, and received his name in honor of General Jackson, whose victory at New Orleans, a month previous, secured to the country the great valley to which the manhood of this man was devoted. His early life was passed in his native place, where he received his preparatory education and developed that devotedness to principle and that desire to benefit his fellow-men which so signally marked his subsequent career. He early became the subject of religious impressions, whose influence never lost their hold upon him, but did not unite with the church until he reached his nineteenth year, at which time he was clerk in the village of Deep River.

His mind having turned toward the ministry, he entered Yale College to prepare for his life-work, and although he had but one year's preparation he maintained a high standard of scholarship during his entire course, and besides, paid his expenses by his own earnings, a fact which must be mentioned to his honor, but it is only just to him to say that he would never advise a young man to imitate his course.

If it made him economical it never made him close; and if he was independent in his self-reliance, no man was ever more helpful to others; and although business occupied both his hands and half his mind it never possessed a corner of his soul. After graduating from college, in 1841, he spent a few months in the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts, and later was for several years connected with the Western Reserve College as instructor and financial agent. In April 1848, he removed to Beloit, Wisconsin, and from that time to the day of his death was identified with the interests of Beloit College in his sympathies, and for nearly all the time by official position as professor of mathematics or treasurer of the college. A most thorough business manager, he never allowed secular interests to interfere with his Christian life; overwhelmed with business, he was thoroughly unselfish; most active among those who were eager for money; with plans the largest and most sanguine, he never seemed in haste to be rich.

Active, energetic and enterprising, of establishing a Christian institution as a center of blessing for all men, for all time, he said at the beginning of his work, "We can have a college here if we will make one"; a principal which seemed to inspire him in all his efforts. In laboring for the endowment of the college, he always sought to lead the way to which he called others, thinking it easier to earn an endowment than to beg one. In working for the college, however, he did not separate it from the interests of the community; whatever would build up the city, whether a bank, a railroad, a water-power, a Sabbath-school, or a church, would strengthen the college; and thus sympathizing with and aiding in all ways to build up a Christian community.

The city is full of monuments of his energy. For the endowment of the college no resources which his greatest worldly success could have brought in as the result of such an example of high aims in business life. His devotion itself was a continual endowment of vigor and soul, and even his presence a constant inspiration to his fellow teachers and pupils. As a teacher he was earnest, clear, faithful and kind; as a friend, true.

What he was in one relation that was he in all; and manifold as his life was it was the most simple in its character. Hopeful in adversity, genial, helpful, earnest, full of activity of body, mind and soul, he faithfully illustrated in his life the truth that man is possessed of a divine nature which is but a spark of divinity itself. It was always morning with him, and the darkest clouds were tinged with a golden hue.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, mind, might and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," was the great rule of his life, and most faithfully did he carry it out in his works. He was an incessant worker, and although his vivid spirit kept its glow, his manifold labors wore upon his frame, and on Saturday night, the 1st of March, 1873, he went weary to rest. During the night he was attacked with typhoid pneumonia, and for nearly seven days lay under its power. At four o'clock on Saturday, March 8, he ceased to breathe, and his features, freed from the perpetual urgency of his spirit, assumed in their repose a nobleness which was a new revelation of the grandeur of character which had been forming under that restless activity.

His last audible words were, "How beautiful," and when asked, "Is it Christ?" he replied, "Yes." His favorite idea of heaven was, "work without weariness." He has gone! and though dead, he still lives, and the influence of his noble life and example shall continue to grow as the years roll away.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains correspondence, news articles, photographs, a diary, and other documents pertaining to or written by Jackson J. Bushnell, and they span from the 1830s (before his time at Beloit College) to well after his death in 1873. There are a number of materials related to the contents of the collection itself and about and by various members of his family.

Arrangement Note

The alphabetical by subject arrangement order presented here has been imposed by the College Archives staff.

Provenance Note

Some materials were donated to the Beloit College Archives in 1966 by the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library in Old Lyme, Connecticut. Correspondence regarding this transaction is contained within the collection primary source documents.

Other materials were donated by Emma L. Bushnell in 1934, an index for which is also in the collection's primary source documents.

Subjects

Beloit College--History

Collection Inventory

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Correspondence - Oliver J. Lay (receiver for J. J. Bushnell) --- 1859-1865	1
Correspondence - Oliver J. Lay (receiver for J. J. Bushnell) --- 1871-1873	1
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