

## **MS-140 Oscar Edwin Carr Papers**

**Collection Number:** MS-140

**Title:** Oscar Edwin Carr Papers

**Dates:** 1885-1966 (bulk 1888-1906)

**Creator:** Carr, Oscar Edwin, 1869-1967

**Summary/Abstract:** A life-long resident of Yellow Springs, Ohio, Carr attended Antioch College, then worked in his father's nursery business which he eventually took over in the 1920s. The bulk of his papers date from 1888 to 1906 and consist of correspondence from various family members and women friends.

**Quantity/Physical Description:** 1 linear foot

**Language(s):** English

**Repository:**

Special Collections and Archives, Paul Laurence Dunbar Library, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092.

**Restrictions on Access:** There are no restrictions on accessing material in this collection.

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**Preferred Citation:**

[Description of item, Date, Box #, Folder #], MS-140, Oscar Edwin Carr Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

**Acquisition:** The papers of Oscar Edwin Carr were accessioned into the Wright State University Department of Archives and Special Collections in October, 1982. They were donated by Mr. Carr's grandnieces and grandnephew, Corrine Odiorne Pelzl, Eve Odiorne Sullivan, and Ken Odiorne.

**Other Finding Aid:** The finding aid is available on the Special Collections & Archives, Wright State University Libraries web site at <https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms140.pdf> . It is also available in the OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository at <http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/> .

**Related Material:**

- MS-117 Derostus F. Ladley Papers  
(<https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms117.pdf> )
- MS-135 Alice Griffith Carr Papers  
(<https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms135.pdf> )
- MS-137 Totten Family Papers  
(<https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms137.pdf> )
- MS-138 Oscar D. Ladley Papers  
(<https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms138.pdf> )
- MS-139 Jerusha Hall Peacock Papers  
(<https://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms139.pdf> )
- MS-155 Ladley/ Carr/Totten/Harris/Odiorne/ Families Photographs  
(<https://libraries.wright.edu/special/collectionguides/files/ms155.pdf>)
- Additional forty-eight letters from Florence Greer to Oscar Edwin Carr from 1892 December to 1895 May can be found at Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

**Processed by:** Thomas Kuhn, 1984 May. Finding aid revised according to DACS by Toni Vanden Bos, 2018 August.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged into 6 series as follows:

Series I:	Laura Howell-Hansell Correspondence, 1888-1900
Series II:	Florence “Chessie” Greer Correspondence, 1892-1906
Series III:	Alice Derby Carr Correspondence, 1903-1906, 1934
Series IV:	Family Correspondence, 1890-1906
Series V:	Business Correspondence, 1890-1966
Series VI:	Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1885-1956

**Biographical/Historical Note:**

Oscar Edwin Carr was born in Yellow Springs, Ohio on November 12, 1869. He was the first child born to William Wallace and Mary Ladley Carr. His maternal grandfather, Rev. D.F. Ladley, was among the founders of Antioch College, and his father was the founder and proprietor of W.W. Carr Nurseries, a well-known Yellow Springs firm. The Carr Nursery was founded in 1869, the year Oscar was born. Fruit trees were the primary commodity of the business.

Oscar began an early association with his father's firm, and much of his time was spent on the road as a salesman. After the selling season he would return home and help with the packing and shipping operations. Upon his father's death in the 1920s, Oscar became the proprietor of the Carr Nurseries.

Oscar twice attended Antioch College, first from 1886 to 1889, in the college preparatory program, and then from 1891 to 1895 as an undergraduate. Because of his strong commitment to the family business, however, Oscar was never able to complete his education, thus, he never received a degree from Antioch.

In 1906, Oscar married Alice Derby. They had three children – Dorthy, Helen, and Donald. The family lived at 321 Dayton St. in Yellow Springs until 1941 when Alice passed away. At that time the remaining members of the household took up residence at 1108 Xenia Ave., Yellow Springs. Oscar continued in the nursery business until shortly before the time of his death on October 6, 1967. At that time he was the oldest active member of the Ohio Nurserymen's Association.

### **Scope and Content**

The heart of the Oscar Edwin Carr Papers is the correspondence found in Series I-III. These three series chiefly consist of letters from three separate women with whom Oscar was romantically involved. Together, the letters can be particularly useful in the study of late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> century courtship in upper-middle class American society. The letters play evidence to the social mores, moral values, and accepted conventions of behavior between young men and young women of that period. In addition, there is much information on social life and activities of late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Yellow Springs, Ohio and Antioch College. These first three series are arranged in chronological order with the letters of Laura Howell-Hansell, beginning in 1888 and continuing through 1900, coming first; followed by the letters of Florence "Chessie" Greer, beginning in 1892 through 1906, coming second; and the letters of Alice Derby-Carr, beginning in 1904, coming third.

Series I. Laura Howell-Hansell Correspondence, 1888-1900, is chiefly letters from Laura Howell-Hansell to Oscar Edwin Carr. They begin in 1888 while Oscar and Laura were students at Antioch College. As stated above, these correspondences continue until 1900. Laura was a resident of Springfield, Ohio, and many of her letters give interesting details of social life in Springfield during the 1890's. Many of these letters were written to Oscar while he was on the road as a salesman for his father's firm. The showed the stresses put on the relationship by his absences. Most of these letters have been dated; however, some remain undated due to the lack of external and internal evidence. These undated letters can be found in file 6 of the series. The second portion of this series contains letters from Oscar to Laura during the years 1890-1893. Though few in number, these letters are of interest; since the majority was written while Oscar was on the road, they give a good indication as to the extent of his sales territory. The final portion of the series contains correspondence to Laura from other various individuals between 1889 and 1892. The majority of these are from Laura's friend Lucy (full name undetermined). Also included are correspondences from the following individuals: M.H. Humphrey, Madge (full name undetermined), and Annie Cooty Martin.

Series II. Florence “Chessie” Greer Correspondence, 1892-1906, consists of the correspondence of Florence “Chessie” Greer. Florence, a cousin of Oscar, was a resident of Topeka, Kansas. She and Oscar became romantically involved, and her many letters to Oscar over the years make up the largest series of the collection. Florence was deeply attached to Oscar and her letters to him are filled with very discreet and personal, yet poetic messages. They show the development and decline, over a fourteen year period, of an intense and passionate relationship. Of particular interest are the letters from 1898-1899 when Florence and Oscar were engaged. Many of these give evidence of Florence’s attempt to lure Oscar into moving to Kansas. Researchers beware; Florence often used her nickname “Chessie” in signing many of these letters. Researchers might also take note that an additional forty-eight letters from Florence Greer to Oscar during the period of December 1892 to May 1895 can be found at Antiochiana, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Series III. Alice Derby Carr Correspondence, 1903-1906, 1934, consists mainly of the correspondence from Alice Derby Carr to Oscar during the years of their courtship, 1904-1906. Alice was a native of Columbus, Ohio. Her letters are filled with references to upper middle class Columbus society and also contain references to Houghton, Michigan where she lived for several months during 1905. Several letters in this series were written by Alice to Oscar during 1934 while she and several other family members wintered in Winter Park, Florida. The final portion of this series consists of rough draft letters written to Alice by Oscar from March 1903 to May 1904. These letters are very difficult to read, and the paper on which they are written is very brittle. Please handle these with great care.

Series IV. Family Correspondence, 1890-1906, consists of small correspondence to Oscar from various family members during the period, 1890-1906. Included here, are letters from the following individuals: Mary Ladley Carr (Oscar’s mother), Alice Carr and Katharine Carr Harris (his two sisters), George Carr (brother), Florence Derby Haigler (sister-in-law), Alice and Bessie Totten (cousins), Ada, Kate and Kitty Greer (cousins). This series is arranged in chronological order.

Series V. Business Correspondence, 1890-1966, consists of a small amount of business correspondence, mainly from the period 1890-1898. This series is hardly complete and represents only a very small segment of business correspondence received by the Carr Nurseries over the years. Of special interest is a letter sent to Oscar in 1966 from the Equity Research company, inquiring about “...owners or their lawful heirs to unclaimed assets of value...”

Series VI. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1885-1956, consists of a small number of letters written to Oscar between 1891 and 1898 from the following individuals: Lucy (full name undetermined), Jennie Wheeler, C. Brown, J.A. Van Fossen, and Joe Dale. A second segment of the series mainly contains pieces of ephemera such as wedding announcements, party invitations, Christmas and Valentine cards, newspaper clippings, handbills and pamphlets, marriage proposals (several women proposed to Oscar), postcards, and a high school physics paper. The material from this portion of the series covers the years 1885-1956.

## **Subject Terms:**

### **Persons/Families**

Carr, Oscar Edwin, 1869-1967  
Howell-Hansell, Laura  
Carr, Alice Derby  
Greer, Florence (Chessie)

### **Organizations/Corporate Names**

Carr Nursery  
Antioch College -- History

### **Places**

Yellow Springs (Ohio) – History  
Yellow Springs (Ohio) – Business  
Yellow Springs (Ohio) – Social life and customs

### **Subjects (general)**

Courtship – 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Courtship – 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Love-letters

### **Material Types**

Letters (correspondence)  
Photographs

## Collection Inventory

<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
		<b>Series I: Laura Howell-Hansell Correspondence</b>	<b>1888-1900</b>
1	1	Correspondence from Laura Howell-Hansell	1888-1890
1	2	Correspondence from Laura Howell-Hansell	1891
1	3	Correspondence from Laura Howell-Hansell	1892
1	4	Correspondence from Laura Howell-Hansell	1893
1	5	Correspondence from Laura Howell-Hansell	1898-1900
1	6	Correspondence from Laura Howell-Hansell	undated
1	7	Correspondence from Oscar Edwin Carr	1890-1893
1	8	Miscellaneous Correspondence to Laura Howell-Hansell	1889-1892
		<b>Series II: Florence "Chessie" Greer Correspondence</b>	<b>1892-1906</b>
1	9	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1892-1893
1	10	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1894-1895
1	11	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1896-1897
1	12	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1898 January-June
1	13	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1898 July-December
1	14	Correspondence from Florence Greer	circa 1898
1	15	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1899
2	1	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1900-1903
2	2	Correspondence from Florence Greer	1904-1906
2	3	Correspondence from Oscar Edwin Carr	1902-1903
		<b>Series III: Alice Derby Carr Correspondence</b>	<b>1903-1906, 1934</b>
2	4	Correspondence from Alice Derby Carr	1904 June-September
2	5	Correspondence from Alice Derby Carr	1904 October-December
2	6	Correspondence from Alice Derby Carr	1905
2	7	Correspondence from Alice Derby Carr	1906
2	8	Correspondence from Alice Derby Carr	1934
2	9	Correspondence from Oscar Edwin Carr	1903-1904
		<b>Series IV: Oscar Edwin Carr, Family Correspondence</b>	<b>1890-1906</b>
2	10	Family Correspondence	1890-1906
		<b>Series V: Oscar Edwin Carr, Business Correspondence</b>	<b>1890-1966</b>
2	11	Business Correspondence	1890-1966
		<b>Series VI: Oscar Edwin Carr, Miscellaneous Correspondence</b>	<b>1885-1956</b>
2	12	Letters to Oscar Edwin Carr	1891-1898
2	13	Ephemera	1885-1956