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Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: Ladd-Franklin, Christine, 1847-1930

Title: Christine Ladd-Franklin Papers

Dates: 1860-1873

Quantity: 0.4 cubic feet (1 box)

Diary of Christine Ladd-Franklin, Vassar College Class of 1869. Describes her experiences as a

Abstract: Vassar student, the challenges of financing her education, and her early years of teaching before beginning her graduate work in mathematics.

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Biographical Note

Christine Ladd-Franklin, psychologist, mathematician, and logician, was born in Windsor, CT. She took the college preparatory course at Wesleyan Academy in Wilbraham, MA, and continued her education at Vassar, graduating in 1869. After leaving Vassar, Ladd taught science in various secondary schools, studied mathematics on her own, and published several articles on mathematics in the *English Educational Times*. At the age of thirty-two she was admitted to graduate study at Johns Hopkins, where she met her husband, Fabian Franklin, a professor of mathematics. While at Johns Hopkins, she contributed several papers to the *American Journal of Mathematics*. Ladd-Franklin pursued her scholarly career with remarkable energy, beginning with work in symbolic logic and continuing with her research in the theory of vision, especially color vision, which formed a significant contribution to psychology. Her paper on binocular vision was published in the first volume of the *American Journal of Psychology* (November 1887). A Ph.D. was given, belatedly, by John Hopkins in 1926. Vassar awarded her an honorary LL.D. in 1887, the only honorary degree ever awarded by Vassar. A lecturer in psychology and logic at Johns Hopkins and Columbia, Ladd-Franklin was associate editor for J. M. Baldwin's three-volume *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1901-05), presented papers at several international congresses, as well as meetings of the American Philosophical Association and American Psychological Association.

Throughout her life, Ladd-Franklin worked to widen women's opportunities for education and academic employment. With her daughter, Margaret, she shared an interest in the campaign for women's suffrage.

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Scope and Content Note

The collection contains two original manuscript diaries, dated approximately 1860-1866 and 1866-1873, which describe Ladd-Franklin's experiences as a Vassar student, the challenges of financing her education, and her early years of teaching before beginning her graduate work in mathematics. They also express a determined

feminism and irritation with contemporary attitudes toward women and limitations on their freedom and opportunities. Also included is one letter to Ladd-Franklin's younger brother Henry from 1869.

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Access and Use

Access

Due to the fragility of the diaries, researchers will be asked to use the photocopies of the volumes. Alternately, researchers can use the [digitized version](#) of the collection available via the Vassar College Libraries' Digital Library.

Restrictions on Use

Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#).

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Subject Headings

Organizations:

- Vassar College--Students

Subjects:

- Feminism
- Women college students--New York (State)--Poughkeepsie
- Women mathematicians
- Women psychologists
- Women--Diaries
- Women--Education
- Women--History
- Women--Social conditions

Document Types:

- Correspondence
- Diaries

VCL Categories:

- Math, Science and Medicine
- Vassar College
- Women's History

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Encoding Information

Encoded by Laura Streett, July 2008. Updated by Emma Gronbeck, January 2024.

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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Christine Ladd-Franklin Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

A transcript of the second volume was prepared in conjunction with Rebecca Edwards and the Vassar College History Department, and was reworked for use in the [digitized version](#) of the diary. The digitization project was completed in 2005.

The Christine Ladd-Franklin Papers were separated from the [Vassar College Student Materials Collection](#) and processed as an independent collection, January 2023.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Inez Pollak, VC 1925.

Other Formats

A microfilm copy of the diaries is available in the Vassar College Microfilm Collection.

Both diaries and the letter have been digitized and are available electronically via the [Vassar College Libraries' Digital Library](#).

The later volume (1866-1873) is also available electronically via [Hudson River Valley Heritage](#).

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Container List

- Folder 1 Diaries, microfilming information, circa 1990
- Folder 2 [Diary, Volume I](#), 1860 November 22 - 1866 September 10 [original]
- Folder 3 [Diary, Volume II](#), 1866 September 20 - 1873 April 27 [original]
- Folders 4-6 Diary, Volume I, 1860 November 22 - 1866 September 10 [photocopy]
- Folder 7 Diary, Volume II, 1866 September 20 - 1873 April 27 [photocopy]
- Folder 8 [Letter, Christine Ladd-Franklin to Henry "Harry" Ladd](#), 8 May 1869 [photocopy with transcript]

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