

# McGill University Archives

## Finding Aid - Phillip Carpenter Fonds (MG 4144)

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[archivalcollections.library.mcgill.ca/index.php/phillip-carpenter-fonds](http://archivalcollections.library.mcgill.ca/index.php/phillip-carpenter-fonds)

# Phillip Carpenter Fonds

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## Table of contents

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Summary information .....	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch .....	3
Scope and content .....	4
Access points .....	4
Series descriptions .....	4

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	McGill University Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Phillip Carpenter Fonds
<b>ID:</b>	MG 4144
<b>Accession nos. [alternative]:</b>	1989-0052
<b>Date:</b>	1764, 1834-1879 (date of creation)
<b>Physical description:</b>	0.2 m of textual records
<b>Dates of creation, revision and deletion:</b>	
<b>Note [generalNote]:</b>	Inventory list available

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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

Born in Bristol, England, son of Lant and Anne Carpenter, Philip Carpenter received all his education in England. After attending universities in Edinburgh and Manchester, he received his B.A. from the University of London in 1841. Upon graduation he, like his father, became a Unitarian minister, first in Stand for 5 years and then in Warrington for 12 years. In this period he became involved in the welfare of the communities, particularly in education, the temperance movement and sanitation. Although shell collecting had been a hobby since boyhood, it was the purchase of the Mazatlan collection of California shells in 1856 which was the start of a serious interest. Carpenter offered the collection to the British Museum with the understanding that he would arrange and classify the specimens. The subsequent publication of a catalogue led to invitations to do similar work in the United States, particularly at the Smithsonian Institute, and in 1858 he was granted a two-year leave of absence from his ministerial duties. Upon his return difficulties with the hierarchy of the Unitarian Church convinced him to break away completely and devote his remaining years to Conchology. In 1865 he emigrated to Montreal. His offer of a duplicate set of the Mazatlan collection to McGill University was accepted by Principal Dawson who named Carpenter Honorary Curator, providing him with space to mount his specimens and defraying any costs. Dawson intended that this collection would result in the building of the Redpath Museum. Although not primarily a collector himself Carpenter went on to classify shells for many collectors throughout the United states. Along with his work on shells, Carpenter continued to urge City councils to improve the sanitary conditions of Montreal and was instrumental in laws prohibiting the exhumation of bodies in disused graveyards when the City wanted the land for housing. Ironically, he died of typhoid fever in 1877 at the

age of 57 and is buried in Mount Royal Cemetery.

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## Scope and content

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Most of the collection consists of Carpenter's notes and drawings of shells. There are printed catalogues of shell collections from the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean dating from 1857 to 1876. His incoming correspondence is mainly from collectors in the United States and deals with shells. It covers the period 1858-1876. The main letter writers are J.G. Cooper, a collector from San Francisco, William Dall of the Smithsonian, James Lewis of Albany, N.Y. and William Bairn of the British Museum. Some of the material deals with Carpenter's establishment of the shell collection at McGill in 1866. There are files of clippings dealing with the death of his aunt, Mary Carpenter, (1787-1877) and that of his sister, also named Mary, (1807-1877) who was involved in the establishment of reform schools for girls. Included are some of Carpenter's certificates and diplomas (1834-1843). As well there is a copy of a biography of Carpenter written by his brother, Russell, in 1880. The book quotes extensively from Carpenter's letters, covering not only his years in the ministry but also his travels in the United States prior to the Civil War. As well there are interesting details of life in Montreal from 1865-1877.

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## Notes

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### Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Titled based on the content of the fonds.

### Finding aids

Finding aid available

### Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Mini

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## Access points

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- Textual record (documentary form)

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## Series descriptions

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Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
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MG 4144-1	File - Pencil sketches	undated
MG 4144-2	File - Notes and sketches	1864
MG 4144-3	File - Notes and sketches	undated
MG 4144-4	File - Notes and sketches	undated
MG 4144-5	File - Handwritten California shells catalogue	undated
MG 4144-6	File - Drawings	undated
MG 4144-7	File - Shell prints	undated
MG 4144-8	File - Shell photos	undated
MG 4144-9	File - Loose notes	undated
MG 4144-10	File - Loose notes	undated
MG 4144-11	File - Loose notes	approximately 1870
MG 4144-12	File - Copy of Supplementary Report of the Present State of our Knowledge of the Mollusca of the West Coast of North America - 1864	1863-1872
MG 4144-13	File - Copy of Otia Chonchologica	1764-1862
MG 4144-14	File - Receipts, shells for sale	1862-1863, approximately 1870
MG 4144-15	File - Incoming correspondence	1855-1877
MG 4144-16	File - The Memoirs of Dr. P.P. Carpenter	1880
MG 4144-17	File - Ledger Book	approximately 1860, approximately 1870
MG 4144-18	File - Clippings - Mary Carpenter (1787-1877)	undated
MG 4144-19	File - Correspondence from J.G. Cooper	1863-1871
MG 4144-20	File - Loose notes	undated
MG 4144-21	File - Certificates, diplomas	1834-1867
MG 4144-22	File - Obituary clippings, etchings, letters from McGill	1877
MG 4144-23	File - Clippings - Mary Carpenter (1807-1877)	undated
MG 4144-24	File - Diplomas	1836, 1860
MG 4144-25	File - Loose notes	undated