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**THURSTON/CORTHELL COLLECTION  
GEN MS 30**

**Total Boxes: 2  
Linear Feet: 2 ft.**

**By  
Megan Hendrix**

**Portland, Maine  
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## **Administrative Information**

**Provenance:** The Thurston/Corthell Collection was found in the Special Collections (then Archives) reading room. It is believed to have been donated by the Alumni Association.

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**Cite as:** Thurston/Corthell Collection, Special Collections, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

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

## **Historical Note**

William J. Corthell was the first principal of the Western Normal School in Gorham. W.J. Corthell served as principal from 1878-1905. He was born in Addison, Maine on July 11, 1827 and he received his bachelor's degree from Colby College in 1857 and was awarded an honorary L.L.D. from Colby in 1893. The Gorham Normal School was a merging of two previously failed schools, the men's Gorham Academy and the Women's Gorham Seminary. GNS (Gorham Normal School) was founded in 1878 by the state legislature in response to a letter from Corthell urging the State to open up a school to educate teachers. He spent his tenure as a principal fighting for the state to recognize the need for post-high school level education for teachers and stayed active until he died in Calais, Maine on November 1, 1908. Corthell, along with Governor Frederick Robie put in the permits to the state for the campus and raised over \$15,000 to start the school. In 1970, Gorham Normal School went through changes and became the University of Maine in Gorham. Both Corthell and Robie had halls named after them and still are used as USM buildings today. The only mentions of "Thurston" in relation to the Gorham Normal School are 7 female alumni with that last name, 3 are married last names listed in the 1969 alumni directory. The earliest is Marjorie Thurston, Class of 1907.

## **Description of the Collection**

This collection of memorabilia was found in 2 boxes on the "storage table" in the Special Collections/Archives Reading Room. These materials had come into the Archives and not been processed. The last Archivist, Marge Duvall, was contacted and said she believed the collection came to the Archives from the Alumni Association. There was

an original hand-written accession list found in the box. A copy of this is included in the file of this collection.

This collection has been divided into 4 series and the groupings are as follows:

#### Series 1. Material Objects

This series includes a graduation dress from 1892 believed to be from Laura Byrne from the GNS 2<sup>nd</sup> Class of 1892. It is a two-piece dress and appears to be handsewn. The bodice of the dress has bone ribbing and the bodice looks to be a red or pink silk. An embroidered shawl is also included in this series. The shawl is undated, appears to be sewn by machine or professionally done and has crocheted edging and tassels. The third material object is a black lacquer jewelry box. The inside cover is padded green satin and the fittings are green satin and velvet. The main body is decorated with painted flowers, mother-of-pearl and gold-leaf accents. Inside the box is a mother-of-pearl handled pocket knife with "W.J. Corthell" engraved on it, a decorative gold stud and a bisque doll's arm. The last object is an autograph book given to Mary Louise Corthell in 1884 by her father William J. Corthell. Inside are 26 signatures, some can be traced back to a graduating class at the Gorham Normal School. The book is likely made of cardboard and decorated outside with a gold-leaf floral pattern on what appears to be a glossed paper.

#### Series 2. Carbon Photographs

This series includes a total of 40 photographs with dates ranging through the 1880s. There are 12 photographs that have names written on them, none of which are able to clearly be linked to the Gorham Normal School. The remaining 28 are a mix of men, women, children and even a few families.

#### Series 3. Gorham Normal School Memorabilia

This series consists of 6 graduation examinations ranging from 1881-1901. There is a tribute card to William Corthell by William Wallace Stetson and a blank "letter of recommendation" from 1882 that would be sent out to the surrounding towns after the teachers had passed their graduation exam, an actual letter of recommendation for Laura Byrne dated 1890 (although records we have indicate a Laura Byrne graduated in 1892) and 2 of the same copies of the graduation examination questions and one with different questions.

#### Series 4: Oversize

This series houses 3 items found in the Material Objects series. They are the 1892 graduation dress, the lacquered jewelry box with contents and the shawl.

## Appendix:

This contains a list of names of the identified people in 12 of the carbon photographs, a list of the names in alphabetical order from Mary Corthell's autograph book and what they wrote, and a list of photographers in alphabetical order of the unidentified people in the carbon photographs.

## Keywords:

Gorham Normal School, Western Gorham Normal School, William J. Corthell, Carbon Photograph, Autograph Book, University of Southern Maine, State of Maine Educational Department

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
<b>Series 1. Material Objects (1883, 1885-1887, [1892], 1893, 1905, 1911, undated)</b>			
1	1	Autograph Book	1883, 1885-1887, 1893, 1905, 1911 Undated
1		Lacquered Jewelry Box See Oversize	Undated
2		Graduation Dress See Oversize	[1892]
2		Shawl See Oversize	Undated
<b>Series 2. Carbon Photographs (1878, 1880, 1884, 1888, undated)</b>			
1	2	Identified Photographs	1880, 1878, 1884, Undated
1	3-5	Unidentified Photographs	1878, 1884, 1888, Undated
<b>Series 3. Gorham Normal School Memorabilia (1881-1882, 1889, 1890-1892, 1894, 1898, 1901)</b>			
1	6	Gorham Normal School	1881, 1889, 1891, 1898, 1892, 1894, 1901
1	7	State of Maine Educational Department	1881, 1882, 1890
<b>Series 4. Oversize ([1892])</b>			
O/S Dr. 29		Lacquered Jewelry Box	Undated
2		Graduation Dress	[1892]
2		Shawl	Undated

**Appendix:**

List of names on the carbon photographs:

Buzzell, Nellie E.; Dayton, Maine

Cormier, Mabel; Sept 16, 1884, 12  
years old

Cormier, Rosamond; 4 ½ yrs-1884

Dinsmore, Julia

Ladd, Dora &amp; Cara [Clara]

Mitchell, George Everett

Mitchell, R.G.

Phillip, Harold Sachman

Phillips, Marion

Phillips, Mrs. [possibly]

Phillips, W.R.; for Mary Corthell

Stitson, J.W.; 1878

List of names in Mary Corthell's autograph book:

Last Name	First Name	Place	Date	Class
Buck	F.A.	Robbinston	April 21, 1885	
Brooks	Angie M.		January 27, 1887	1886
Brown	Florence M.	Baring, ME (Calais)	April 22, 1885	
Burleigh	Josie A.		January 27, 1887	1887 (Josephine A.)
Chaplin	Agnes B.	Orono (GNS)	January 26, 1887	1887
Colby	Jennie M.	Colby	March 14, 1887	1885
Estabrooke	H.M.		March 26, 1887	
Estabrooke	H.	Gorham	March 22, 1887	
G(S)agelose	Katie	Calais		
Gegrod	Pauline A.	New Castle, ME	January 25, 1887	
Hayden	Jane	Calais	October 10, 1886	
Hunt	Marion	Robbinstown, ME	Sept. 24, 1905	
Jenkins	Mabel	Kittery	October 9, 1886	1885
Libby	Eva E.	Auburn	January 27, 1887	1887
Loring	Hattie J.	E. Otisfield, ME	January 25, 1887	1887 (Harriet J.)
McAllister	Mary A.	Minneapolis, MN	July 8, 1885	
McLeod	Lena E.	Pomeroy Ridge, N.B. (Calais)	Feb. 2, 1911	
Pera ( c )y	Katie	Phippsburg	January 26, 1887	1887
Taylor	Jennie Louise	N. Fairfield	January 26, 1887	1887
Tozier	Vyra L.	Fairfield Centre	January 28, 1887	1887
Vose	Elisha	Miles City, Montana Territory	July 8, 1883	
Vose	Emma J.	Calais	July 12, 1885	
Vose	Laura H.	Calais (Shepard Bay)		
Warren	Augusta	Gorham	July 1905	
White	Viola M.	Winchester, MA	1893	

## List of photographers of unidentified carbon photographs:

<b>Last Name / Company</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>	
Brandmo		Montevideo, MN			Child
Carleton	C.G.	Waterville	1888	Carrol A. Wilern (?)	Child
Claflin		Worcester, MA			Female
Conant		478 1/2 Congress St. Portland			Female
Conant		Portland			Female
Conant		Portland		Daniel Dinsmore?	Male
Critcherson & Hallock		S. Framingham, MA			Male Child
Dubeck		12 Monument Sq. Portland			Male
Edwards	W.H.	St. Stephen, N.B.	1878	J.W. Stetson	Male
Gardner & Philbrick		Biddeford			Male
Glenton		Nashua, NH			Male
Hardy		Massachusetts			Female
Hearn	Chas W.	Portland			Male
Kinney	Jackson	Portland			2 children
Kinney	Jackson	Portland			Female
Kinney	Jackson	Portland			Female
Kinney	Jackson	Portland			Female
Kinney	Jackson	Portland			Female
Lamson		Portland			Female
Lamson		Portland			Male
Lamson		5 Temple St. Portland			Male
Lamson		478 1/2 Prebble St. Portland			Mother/Daughter
Miller		Minneapolis		Ivorette Finish	Male
Notman		Boston			Male
Oswald Brothers		Minneapolis			Family
Stoddard	FA	Calais			Male
Swan		Norway, ME			Family

<b>Last Name / Company</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>	
The New		DC			Female
Ye Longfellow Gallery		Portland			Female
<b>Identified Photographs:</b>					
Carpenter		Kansas City, MO		R.G. Mitchell	
Goss, Artist		Milford, NH		Julia Dinsmore	
Jordan		Washington, DC	Feb-05	Rosamond Cormier	
Jordan		Washington, DC	1884	Mabel Cormier	
McClaire	M.S.	Seattle, W.T.		Harold Sachman Phillip	
McClaire	M.S.	Seattle, W.T.		Marion Phillips	
McClaire	M.S.	Seattle, W.T.		Mrs. Phillips?	
McClaire	M.S.	Seattle, W.T.		W.R. Phillips for Mary Corthell	
Poivon (?)	E.J.	Westbrook, ME		Dana & Clara Ladd	
Smith (SR)				Nellie Buzzell	
Ye Holland Studios		No.611 Washton St. Boston		George Everett Mitchell	