Scope Note

The Lewis Tappan collection, which spans 1/2 linear feet and covers the years 1847 to 1860, is probably a portion of Lewis Tappan's Anti-Slavery library presented to Howard University in 1873. Six scrapbooks constitute the bulk of the collection. The contents of the scrapbooks are newspaper clippings examining all angles and development of slavery and the anti-slavery movement. Holographic notes by Tappan are
found throughout the scrapbooks.

Highlights of the collection are clippings on Free Soil Conventions held in 1848 and 1852 and the National Liberty Convention of 1847 held in Buffalo, New York. The clippings on these conventions are detailed to the point of allowing close examination and analysis of each anti-slavery convention.

A smaller scrapbook of pious resolutions is the only item not associated with slavery but it probably was a guiding force in the day to day activities of Tappan.

Printed material includes admittance passes to anti-slavery meetings, including a "lady's pass." There are also two printed documents and samples of multi-colored slave grown cotton. Two catalogues of books and pamphlets pertaining to the Anti-Slavery Movement, one dated 1851 are included.

Of special note is a manuscript regarding the British West India Colonies' import and export business from 1829 to 1840.

Biographical Data

1788 May 23   Born in Northampton, Ma., son of Benjamin and Sarah (Homes) Tappan.

1813 Sept. 7   First marriage to Susanna Aspinwall, union produced six children.

1823 to 1837  Merchant in various capacities. Enters into partnership with his brother Arthur.

1833          One of the founders of the New York Anti-Slavery Society.

1839-1841     Leader in the movement to secure the freedom
of Joseph Cinque and the Amistad captives.

1840  With the split in the American Anti-Slavery Society, Tappan led the formation of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and served as its treasurer.

1841-1849  Established The Mercantile Agency as the first successful commercial credit rating agency in the country under the name Lewis Tappan and Co.

1843  Attended international Anti-Slavery convention in London at the suggestion of John Quincy Adams.

1846  Helped in the founding of the American Missionary Association and served as its treasurer.

1849  Retired from his enterprise to devote his life to humanitarian causes.

1854  Second marriage, to Mrs.-Sarah J. Davis.

1855  Resigned as Correspondence Secretary of the American and Foreign Anti-Slave Society to accept office in the more militant Abolition Society.

1873 June 21  Died in Brooklyn,

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Series Description

Series A  Scrapbooks

Box 101-1 to 101-2  Include six scrapbooks compiled by Tappan containing clipping, resolutions, pious resolutions and manuscript notes by Tappan, relating to slavery and the Anti-Slavery Movement.

Series B  Printed Material

Box 101-2  Admittance passes to anti-slavery meetings and a religious verse.

Series C  Documents
Box 101-2  Manuscript and official documents.

Series D  Artifact

Box 101-2  Multi-colored samples of slave grown cotton.

Series E  Catalogues

Box 101-3  Two catalogues of anti-slavery books and pamphlets.

Series F  Manuscript

Box 101-3  A manuscript pertaining to the British West India Colonies including tables on the import and export business from 1829 to 1840.

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Container List

A  Scrapbooks

Box 101-1  Folder

1  Resolutions (newsclippings)
2  Slavery (primarily newsclippings)
3  Slavery (newsclippings)

Box 101-2

4  The Pittsburg Convention
5  Slavery (primarily newsclippings)
6  Anti-slavery (notes & clippings)

B  Printed Material

7  Admittance passes (4)
8  Verses (3)

C  Documents

9  Document respecting the Articles Communicated by Mr. Tappan
10  Document - friendly address from the undersigned inhabitants of London

D  Artifact
11 Slave grown cotton and envelope

E Catalogues

Box 101-3

12 Lewis Tappan Anti-Slavery library catalogue
13 Catalogue of Anti-Slavery books and pamphlets - 1851

F Manuscript

14 Manuscript re.: British West India Colonies