Guide to the Josiah Bartlett Family Papers, 1710-1918

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:
Josiah Bartlett Papers, 1710-1918

Repository:
New Hampshire Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-228-6688
http://www.nhhistory.org/

Collection Number:
M 1917.003 (V), M 1955.010 (V), and M 1984.033 (m)

Author of Finding Aid:
This finding aid was updated by Sarah Galligan in December 2013 based on a previous finding aid by an unknown author.

Creator:
Bartlett, Josiah, 1729-1795

Language:
The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:
4 boxes and 1 folder

Abstract:
The Josiah Bartlett Family Papers, 1710-1798, consists of papers relating to the personal, legal, and financial affairs of Josiah Bartlett, Mary Bartlett, and their sons: Levi Bartlett, Josiah Bartlett, and Ezra Bartlett. Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795) was the second signer of the Declaration of Independence and served as President/Governor of New Hampshire. In total, the collection includes materials from 34 Bartlett family members.
Access and Use

**Acquisition Information and Provenance:**
The Josiah Bartlett Family Papers is composed primarily of two accessions: M 1940.003 (V) and M 1955.010 (V). Both of these collections are filed under M 1940.003 (V). The collection also contains accession M 1954.033 (m). M 1940.003 (V) was a gift of Mrs. Hannah Watt in April 1940. One of the account books in M 1940.003 (V) was a gift of Bertha Watson. M 1955.010 (V) was a gift of Elwin L. Page in November 1955. M 1984.033 (m) was a gift of Robert A. Stein, MD in March 1984.

**Processing Information:**
The original processor and finding aid author of the collection is unknown. This finding aid was updated by Sarah Galligan in December 2013 to follow the standards set-forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

**Access Restrictions:**
The majority of the collection is open for research. The Photostats of Elwin L. Page are restricted and access requires the permission of the library director.

**Location:**
The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

**Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:**
For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Researchers are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

**Preferred Citation:**

Collection Overview

**Biographical Information/ Administrative Information:**
Josiah Bartlett was born on November 21, 1729 in Amesbury, MA. He was educated at local schools until he began an apprenticeship in medicine at the age of 16. In 1750, he established his own practice in Kingston, NH. Josiah Bartlett married Mary Bartlett on January 15, 1754. They had eight children who survived to adulthood: Mary Greeley (1754-1826), Lois Bartlett (1756-1798), Miriam Calef (1758-1785), Rhoda True (born 1760), Levi Bartlett (1763-1828), Josiah Bartlett (1768-1838), Ezra Bartlett (1770-1848), and Sarah Gale (1773-1847).
In Kingston, Josiah Bartlett was chosen as a delegate to the Provincial Assembly in 1765. In 1767, Bartlett was appointed Justice of the Peace in Kingston by Governor John Wentworth. Wentworth dismissed Bartlett from his positions as Justice of the Peace and Colonel in the New Hampshire militia in 1774 when Wentworth learned that Bartlett was not sympathetic to the Royalists.

In 1775, Bartlett was appointed to the Provincial Assembly’s Committee of Correspondence, and in the following year, he was elected to New Hampshire’s first Provincial Congress. However, Bartlett declined the election because his house in Kingston had recently been burned. Bartlett was chosen as a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1775-1776, where he became a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Bartlett was re-elected as a delegate in 1777 but declined for health issues. However, he remained active in local New Hampshire Revolutionary affairs. When Bartlett was elected to the Continental Congress again in 1778, he accepted. As a delegate to the Continental Congress, Bartlett served on the committees of Safety and Secrecy, Munitions, and Marines and Privateering. In his second term, Bartlett helped to draft the Articles of Confederation.

Bartlett declined re-election to a fourth term in the Continental Congress in 1779, again due to his health. In the same year, he was appointed Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, despite not being a lawyer. In 1782, Bartlett was elevated to Associate Justice of the Superior Court, and in 1778, he became the Chief Justice. In 1790, Bartlett left the bench to become President of New Hampshire, an office he held until 1794. The office name was changed to Governor in June 1793 under a new State Constitution.

Throughout his life, Bartlett retained an interest and active practice in medicine. In 1790, Dartmouth College conferred on him an honorary MD. In 1791, he secured legislation that chartered the New Hampshire Medical Society. Bartlett passed away on May 19, 1795.

**Collection Scope and Content Note:**
The Josiah Bartlett Family Papers, 1710-1798, mostly consist of materials relating to the personal, legal, and financial affairs of Josiah Bartlett, Mary Bartlett, and their sons: Levi Bartlett, Josiah Bartlett, and Ezra Bartlett. In total, the collection includes materials from 34 Bartlett family members. The majority of the papers are correspondence. The correspondence of Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795) includes political commentary on Revolutionary New Hampshire, the Revolutionary War, and post-Revolutionary foreign policy including the Napoleonic Wars and the Jay Treaty. One letter from Mary Bartlett
concerns an escaped slave. There is also some correspondence from Josiah Bartlett’s (1768-1838) tenure as United States Senator.

The Josiah Bartlett Papers also include material from his three sons. Subjects of their correspondence include politics, the Washington scene, and the War of 1812. The collection also includes Josiah Bartlett’s (1768-1836) anatomical notes while at Harvard in 1785. Much of the correspondence of Levi and Ezra Bartlett concerns legal matters. The papers also consist of some writings of Levi including a biography of Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795), an essay on pharmacy, an essay on government, and an essay on justifiable war. There is a series of letters between Levi, Ezra, and Josiah (1768-1838) regarding the possibility of commissioning Jonathan Trumbull for a portrait of Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795).

The collection also contains materials from miscellaneous other family members from 1700-1918. There are two letters from John Henry Bartlett (1869-1952), who served as Governor of New Hampshire from 1919 to 1921. The final part of the Josiah Bartlett Papers are photostatic materials of original Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795) papers not housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society, used by Judge Elwin L. Page to write his book, Rider for Freedom.

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**Box 1**

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Folder 2 Josiah Bartlett, 1774-1775
Folder 3 Josiah Bartlett, 1776
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Folder 6 Josiah Bartlett, 1785-1789
Folder 7 Josiah Bartlett, 1790-1792
Folder 8 Josiah Bartlett, 1793-1794, not dated
Folder 9 Josiah Bartlett, not dated
Folder 10 Will and Estate Papers, 1795
Folder 11 Handwritten copies and extracts of letters to and from Josiah Bartlett, circa 1776
Folder 12 Handwritten copies and extracts of letters to and from Josiah Bartlett, circa 1775-1777
Folder 13 Handwritten copies and extracts of letters to and from Josiah Bartlett, 1780-1799
Folder 14 Correspondence from Josiah Bartlett to Mary Bartlett, 1775
Folder 15 Transcriptions of correspondence from Josiah Bartlett to Mary Bartlett, 1775
Folder 16  Correspondence from Josiah Bartlett to Mary Bartlett, 1776
Folder 17  Transcriptions of correspondence from Josiah Bartlett to Mary Bartlett, 1776
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Folder 22  Letter from Mary Bartlett concerning a runaway slave, February 13, 1776
Folder 23  Correspondence from Mary Bartlett to Josiah Bartlett, May – June 1776
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Folder 26  Transcriptions of correspondence from Mary Bartlett to Josiah Bartlett, 1776
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Folder 33  Letters from Josiah Bartlett to his children, 1789-1794
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Box 2
Folder 36  Josiah Bartlett, Jr. papers, 1778, 1789-1823
Folder 37  Josiah Bartlett, Jr. correspondence, 1812
Folder 38  Correspondence from Ezra Bartlett to Levi Bartlett, 1799-1824
Folder 39  Ezra Bartlett papers, 1786-1821
Folder 40  Biography of Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795) by Levi Bartlett
Folder 41  Letters to Josiah Bartlett (1768-1838) from Levi Bartlett, 1792-1823
Folder 42  Letters to Ezra Bartlett from Levi Bartlett, 1800-1825
Folder 43 Levi Bartlett correspondence and will, 1804-1817
Folder 44 Extracts and Copies of Levi Bartlett correspondence, 1796-1822
Folder 45 Levi Bartlett militia papers and memoranda
Folder 46 Levi Bartlett accounts, medical papers, and shares in Dobson’s encyclopedia, 1808-1826
Folder 47 Levi Bartlett legal papers
Folder 48 Levi Bartlett, Town of Kingston, 1797-1821
Folder 49 Joseph Bartlett of Salisbury, MA, papers, 1751-1800
Folder 50 Ichabod Bartlett (1786-1853) papers, 1814-1837
Folder 51 Levi Bartlett of Warner, NH, papers, 1820-1828, 1875
Folder 52 Miscellaneous Bartlett family papers, 1700-1799
Folder 53 Miscellaneous Bartlett family papers, 1800-1820
Folder 54 Miscellaneous Bartlett family papers, 1821-1841
Folder 55 Miscellaneous genealogical papers
Folder 56 Miscellaneous twentieth century materials

Box 3
Volume 1 Account book of Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795) includes general medical accounts, medical visits, drugs, and payment for lumber, November 22, 1764 – June 8, 1790
Volume 2 Account book of Josiah Bartlett (1729-1795) includes medical visits made by Bartlett, July 5, 1765 – May 3, 1768

Box 4
Folders 1-7 Photostats and typewritten copies of materials that Elwin L. Page used to prepare his manuscript Rider for Freedom [Access Restricted- requires permission from the library director]

Separated Materials:
Several items have been removed from the collections. Seven photographs have been placed in the People- Bartlett folder in the photograph collection. There are also materials related to the Josiah Bartlett in the ephemera and broadside collections in the following folders: Military Commissions, Proclamations- miscellaneous, Proclamations- Fast Day, Proclamations- Thanksgiving, Inventories, and the Passports folder.
Subject Terms

People:
- Bartlett, Ezra, 1770-1848
- Bartlett, Ichabod, 1786-1853
- Bartlett, John H. (John Henry), 1869-
- Bartlett, Joseph
- Bartlett, Josiah, 1729-1795
- Bartlett, Josiah, 1768-1838
- Bartlett, Josiah, 1803-1853
- Bartlett, Levi, 1763-1828
- Bartlett, Levi Stevens, 1811-1865
- Bartlett, Mary
- Bartlett, Samuel Colcord, 1817-1898
- Calhoun, John C. (John Caldwell), 1782-1850
- Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845
- Page, Elwin L. (Elwin Lawrence), 1876-
- Plumer, William, 1759-1815
- Thornton, Matthew, 1714?-1803
- True, Rhoda Bartlett, 1760-
- Wingate, Paine, 1739-1838

Organizations:
- United States. Continental Congress
- United States – History – Revolution, 1775-1783
- United States – History – War of 1812

Subjects:
- Farm life.
- Slavery – United States.

Locations:
- Amesbury, MA
- Kingston, NH
- Philadelphia, PA
- Portsmouth, NH
- Salisbury, MA
- Stratham, NH

Occupations:
- Governors.
- Jurists.
- Physicians.
Related Materials

Other archival collections at the New Hampshire Historical Society with materials related to Josiah Bartlett and his family include:

Ezra Bartlett Papers, M 2011.001 and M 2011.015

Bartlett Family Papers, M 1989.050

Levi Bartlett Papers, M 1989.083

The following is a list of library materials related to Josiah Bartlett:


The museum has 26 objects from the life of Josiah Bartlett including furniture, drawings, engravings, and physician materials.