

Guide to the Aiken Family Papers, 1830-1930

Administrative Information

Title and Dates: Aiken Family Papers, 1830-1930

Repository:

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

Collection Number:

2009.014, 1981.109, 1987.026, 1993.054, 2000.009, 2008.064 (All materials are filed under 2009.014)

Author of Finding Aid:

Unknown Author

Creator:

Aiken Family including: Herrick Aiken, 1797-1866 Ann Bradley Aiken, 1810-1884 Walter Aiken, 1831-1893 Jonas Aiken, 1833-1903 James Aiken, 1832-1852 Francis "Frank" Aiken, 1843-1876 Charles L Aiken, 1845-1925 Herrick Aiken, 1888-1940

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English

Extent:

19 bound volumes ; 8 boxes

Abstract:

The collection is composed of business ledgers and patents of the first Herrick Aiken, 197-1866, and correspondence among members of his family, especially of his youngest son Charles L. Aiken.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

The Aiken Family Papers are composed of six separate accessions. Accession 2009.014 was a gift of Richard M. Candee on February 20, 2009. Accession 2008.064 was a gift of Rogers B. Johnson on August 28, 2008. Accession 2000.003 was purchased at Cobb Auctions in Peterborough, NH on April 15, 2000. Accession 1993.054 was a gift of Helena C. (Aiken) Fleming. Accession 1987.026 (m) was a gift of Helena C. (Aiken) Fleming on August 5, 1987. Accession 1981.109 was a gift of Rogers B. Johnson on July, 1981.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by an unknown person, who also authored the finding aid.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

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

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

No special physical characteristics of technical requirements exist for this collection.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

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Preferred Citation:

Item title, Aiken Family Papers, 2009.014. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date Accessed.

Collection Overview

Biographical Information:

Herrick Aiken Family Genealogy Summary 1830-1940

Herrick (1797-1866) m. 1830 Ann Bradley (1810-1874). They had five sons:

Herrick and Ann's first son, **Walter** (1831-1893) m. 1st c 1852 Susan Colby (1832-1877). Walter's second wife was Mary Dodge (1841-1916); they had no children. Walter and Susan had two sons: James (1854-1933) m. 1875 Maria Cole (?-?) and had three children: Bertha (1883-?) Ann (1890-?)

Frank (1892-?) Fred (1855-1913) m. 1st 1875 Emma Cross (1856-?) and had two children: Harry (1876-?) Maud (1879-1883) Fred then married 1888 Dora Gilman (1865-?) and they had four children: Mable (Mabel?) (1888-?) Ruth (b. & d. 1891) Walter (1892-?) Dorothy (1893-1916) Herrick and Ann's second son, Jonas (1833 -1903) m. 1st 1863 Helen Scribner (1844-1865). Their only child: Alice (b. & d. 1865) Jonas then married, 1866, Adeline "Addie" Glidden Proctor (1842-1919). They had three children: Mary Louise (1867-1935) m. 1889 Dr Ervin Drake (?-?). They had: Ruth (1890-?) Mary Louise (1892-?) Ervin Jr. (1894-?) Robert (1896-?) Charles Wilson (1869-1936) m. 1897 Emma Squires (1869-?) They had: Dorothy (1900-?) George (1873-1876)

Herrick and Ann's third son, James (1835-1852) unmarried, no children.

Herrick and Ann's fourth son, **Francis "Frank"** (1843-1876) m. 1865 Harriet "Hattie" Colby (1845-?). No children.

Herrick and Ann's fifth son, **Charles L.** (1845-1925) m. 1st Clara "Bell" Burleigh (1846-1879), no children.

Charles then married, 1884, Martha Jane "Mattie" Hackney (1855-1916) Collin (1874-?), Mattie's son by Peter Dannahoo. He married Laura (?-?) And had Eleanor (1901-? Minot (1903-?) Herrick (1888-1940) m. Helena "Lena" Breen (1892-?); 5 children: Charles (1916-1977) Margaret (1918-1957) John (1920-1961) Jane (1922-1975) Helena (1927-?)

Biographical sketches of Aiken family members:

For details about the educational backgrounds, businesses and inventions of the Aiken men as well as of their membership in fraternal organizations, political activities,

church affiliations, etc, consult: *Aiken Genealogy* compiled by Herrick Aiken in 1924 and added to in the 1970s by a later generation. Histories of Franklin NH, where they owned mills and held political and civic offices also provide information. What follows are short summaries.

Herrick Aiken, 1797-1866, was an inventor and businessman who invented knitting machines and needles. He began a sock knitting factory in Franklin NH, where he also ran a machine shop (and listed himself as a machinist on the census of 1860). He was involved in a patent infringement lawsuit in the 1860's. The collection contains much documentation and correspondence about the lawsuit as well as a sheaf of patents.

Ann Bradley Aiken, 1810-1874, was from Dracut MA where her father was a clergyman. She was clearly a hard working mother (the 1850 census lists nine unrelated males aged 16-25 living with the family in Franklin, suggesting that she boarded some of her husband's factory workers). She was outspoken about what she saw as the faults of her sons; as a result, her relationships with Walter and Jonas in particular were not always smooth. She did not approve of Walter's behavior after his divorce and seems to have resented her dependence in old age upon Jonas' second wife. Her favorite child was the youngest, Charles, and the collection holds both sides of their correspondence from when he was working in the Midwest. In this, she comforted and agreed with him when he complained that his older brothers were unfair and unkind in their financial dealings with him. She apparently genuinely loved his first wife, Bell.

In 1874, Ann moved to Cambridgeport MA and married a widower, Samuel Palmer. Palmer may have been a friend of Ann's family, as there is correspondence between her and sister's daughter about Palmer and his family. Palmer became "feeble" soon after the wedding and apparently died in early 1876, after which Ann moved back to Franklin. In letters to Charles before the move she talked about being lonely and needing money. She also complains about lack of funds to run Palmer's household after her marriage to him. She left everything to Charles in her will.

Walter Aiken, 1831-1893, married Susan Colby, then Mary Dodge. He had two children: James and Fred. Walter had many business and civic accomplishments. With a colleague and the help of his brother Charles, he built and ran the cog railroad up Mount Washington He also built and ran the Summit House and US Signal Corps buildings there. For a time he owned the Hotel Hamilton in Bermuda. While engaging in these activities, he also ran a machine shop in Franklin and assumed responsibility for continuing his father's manufacturing interests there.

His personal relationships with family members, however, were less happy. As noted above, his mother did not approve of his behavior with women. Walter mentioned in letters that he had a poor relationship with his father (he refused, for example, to participate in a "settlement" with Herrick and his brother Jonas.) His brother Charles disliked him and felt unfairly used by him, and his sons James and Fred were estranged from him for long periods, though they ended up running the Franklin factory after his death. Walter died as a result of a massive infection from a gunshot wound to his foot while he was hunting in Maryland.

Jonas Aiken, 1833-1903, married Helen Scribner, then Addie Proctor. He had three children, Mary Louise, Charles W and George. A childhood injury led to hearing loss and blindness in one eye, but Jonas was active and successful. Like his brothers, he worked in his father's machine shop as a young man. Like them, he was also an inventor – he developed a breech loading canon in the early-mid 1860's. He traveled frequently and widely overseeing his numerous real estate investments in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Colorado, Illinois and Nebraska. For a time, he also owned and ran the Sawyer Hotel on Webster Lake near Franklin NH.

Like his brother Walter, Jonas' relationships with family were difficult. His first wife died of tuberculosis soon after their only child was born. He did not like his second wife's family and referred to the Proctors in disparaging terms. He seems to have blamed his wife for the drowning death of baby George, though the circumstances around that event are unknown.

Herrick and Ann's third son James, 1835-1852, was unmarried and had no children. He died of cholera in Calcutta, India on his first voyage abroad.

Francis "Frank", 1843-1876, married Harriet "Hattie" Colby. They had no children. Frank was unwell much of his life.

Charles L. Aiken, 1845-1925, married Clara Isabell "Bell" Burleigh, then Martha Jane "Mattie" Hackney. Mattie brought a son, Collin, to the marriage and they had another, Herrick, together. Between 1862 and 1864, Charles spent the summers chartering and commissioning ships that sailed to Labrador to trade goods for fish and fur. From 1867 to 1871, he worked for his brother, Walter, building the Cog Railway at Mount Washington. During the winters, he worked in his father and Walter's machine shop in Franklin, NH. From 1871 until 1884, Charles worked at various jobs throughout the United States. He then returned to New England where he worked at the Old Colony Railroad and the Boston and Maine Railroad. In 1918, he was in an accident from which he received bad injuries to his ankles and feet. When his application for pension was denied, he returned to Franklin, NH to live with his son, Herrick, until his death in 1925.

Bell, Charles' first wife, was probably from Lowell MA. Much of the time after their marriage, Bell seems to have been left in NH while Charles worked in the Midwest. In the winters of 1876 and 77, however, she joined him in Elkhart, IN and took in boarders to extend family finances.

Bell's death in January 1879 is somewhat mysterious. It occurred in the "asylum" and she may have committed suicide. She was hospitalized for some weeks before her death, but letters between her mother and sister and Charles (in Indiana?) are frustratingly silent about her symptoms or diagnosis. The family genealogy says she "died after a short illness which caused mental derangement."

Mattie, Charles' second wife (sometimes called "Princie" by her parents), was from South Bend Indiana, where her parents ran a grocery store. She had a son, Collin (called "Coatie" by his grandparents) by her first husband, Peter Dannahoo (or Donahoo or Donnahoo or Dunnahoo), a railroad engineer she had divorced. According to the family genealogy, they divorced because of his infidelity and abuse. Letters dated 1885 from Mattie's mother referred to Mattie's unhappiness. Her mother wrote several times telling Mattie to come home anytime not allow Charles to make Collin unhappy. Mattie owned property (at least one house) in South Bend that her father rented for her.

James Aiken, 1854-1933, was the son of Walter and Susan Aiken. He married Maria Cole and had three children: Bertha, Ann, Frank. In 1880, James and Maria were in Kansas trying to farm. Farming unsuccessful, he went to Denver in 1881 but became ill deciding he didn't like the west. Maria helped support them by taking in boarders and sewing. By November of 1882, they were in New Haven, CT, where James worked in a machine shop. He repeatedly complained that he didn't enjoy the dirty, heavy work of being a machinist. Eventually, he took over Walter's business in Franklin, NH, with his brother, Fred.

Walter and Susan's second son, Fred Aiken, 1855-1913, married Emma Cross, then Dora Gilman. He had two children with Emma: Harry and Maud, and four children with: Mabel, Ruth, Walter, Dorothy. There is very little information about Fred. In an 1872 letter, he said the previous five years had been "miserable" at home in Franklin – he apparently was estranged from his father. With his brother James, he carried on Walter's business in Franklin.

Charles L. and Mattie's son Collin (born Collin Dannohoo) married Laura and had Eleanor and Minot. Collin legally changed his surname to Aiken with his mother's help in 1897.

Charles L and Mattie's other son, Herrick Aiken, 1888-1940, married Helena "Lena" Breen. They had five children: Charles, Margaret, John, Jane, and Helena. Herrick was very ill as a young child and for a time unable to walk. He was an inventor and entrepreneur, but his businesses weren't successful, at lest in the early years documented by the letters. He learned to fly by 1911, calling himself "aviator" on his letterhead, and tried to establish a business involving planes. He attached pontoons to planes so they could land on water. He left that around 1913 to concentrate on producing and marketing his invention of movable headlamps for cars or boats (the spherical lights could be moved in any direction by levers next to the steering wheel). He then moved on to manufacturing knitting machines. By 1923, he had invented a refrigerating machine. He also designed and built a commercial garage for automobiles in Lawrence, MA and two mill buildings in Franklin. His later life is undocumented.

Collection Scope and Content Note:

The Aiken Family Papers, 1830-1930, contains account books, business papers, patens, and family correspondence of three generations of the Aiken Family, primarily of Franklin, NH. The collection includes the ledgers, patents, and business correspondence of Herrick Aiken (1797-1866). These materials outline his business interests as a machinist, inventor, and shop owner in Franklin, NH. There is no personal correspondence for Herrick Aiken (1797-1866), but there is some personal correspondence between Herrick Aiken's (1797-1866) wife, Ann Bradley Aiken (1810-1884) and hers sons: Walker Aiken (1831-1893), Jonas Aiken (1833-1903), James Aiken (1832-1952), Francis "Frank" Aiken (1843-1876), and Charles L. Aiken (1845-1925). The majority of family correspondence in the collection is between Charles L. Aiken and his mother, siblings, wives, and sons from approximately 1870 to 1920. Charles L. Aiken discusses his daily life and business interests. In addition to loose manuscript materials, the collection also contains nineteen account books in chronological order dated from 1827 to 1898. The last box in the collection includes photographs of Aiken family houses and some of Herrick Aiken's inventions.

Arrangement:

The **first document case** contains biographical information and notes and original accession information of the various parts of the collection.

The nineteen **bound volumes**, mostly account books, follow in chronological order.

Seven document cases finish the collection. Six contain:

Personal correspondence filed by generation and by the writer of the letter:

Generation 1: Herrick and Ann Generation 2: Their sons in alpha order with any wife's correspondence following her husband's (Charles, Francis, James, Jonas, Walter). Generation 3: Children of Charles, Jonas and Walter

Photographs are in the last document case.

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	1981.109; 2000.009; 2009.014
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Folder 12	Unidentified individuals

Separated Items:

For additional photographs of Aiken family members, see the people photograph files organized by last name. There is also some oversize materials related to the Aiken family located in the broadside collection.

Subject Terms

People:

Aiken, Ann Bradley, 1810-1884
Aiken, Charles A.
Aiken, Charles L., 1845-1925
Aiken, Francis, 1843-1876
Aiken, Helena Breen
Aiken, Herrick, 1797-1866
Aiken, James, 1832-1952
Aiken, Jonas B., 1833-1903
Aiken, Martha Jane
Aiken, Walter, 1831-1893
Winant, John G. (John Gilbert), 1889-1974

Organizations:

Ku Klux Klan (1915-)

Subjects:

Patents

Locations:

Franklin, NH

Occupations:

Inventors