



Fairfield Museum and History Center Library
370 Beach Road
Fairfield, CT 06824

Manuscript Finding Aid

Title: Sherman, Roger Minott (1773-1844). Papers
Collection #: Ms B96
Dates: 1773-1842
Size of collection: 77 items (.25 linear ft)
Accession number: L1997.52
Donor: Carolyn Hitchens
Restrictions: None
Processed by: Barbara E. Austen
Date: December 1997

Biographical/historical note:

Roger Minott Sherman (1773-1844), the son of the Rev. Josiah and Martha Minott Sherman, was born in Woburn, Mass. He grew up in Milford, Goshen, and Woodbridge, Connecticut and graduated from Yale in 1792. In 1796 he was admitted to the bar, married Elizabeth Gould, and set up a law practice in Norwalk. Twin sons, James M. and William G., were born in 1799. Their daughters Harriet and Eliza both died young. He moved his family to Fairfield in 1807, to a home he built on the Old Post Road still known today as the Sherman Parsonage. He continued to practice law, participated in town affairs, was elected to the State Senate, and served as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Errors in Connecticut from 1839-1842. Sherman's interests extended to literature and science.

Roger Minott Sherman's sister Martha married Rev. Justus Mitchell of New Canaan and had children Elizabeth, Sherman, Minott, and Chauncey Root. Sister Elizabeth married John Mitchell while Susannah married John Baldwin. His brothers were Minot and Josiah.

These papers, which complement a collection already in the library, were assembled by the donor's father who was a manuscript collector. Note that most of the documents have penciled notations of what appears to be an inventory number and price, and some of the names and locations have been circled. These notations were evidently made by the dealers from whom these were purchased, not by the collector or the donor. The documents remain in the mylar sleeves in which they were received. The numbers on the stickers correspond to the appraisal sheet.

Scope and content note:

The collection consists of business and personal correspondence, bills and receipts, and correspondence and documents related to Roger Minott Sherman's application for a patent for a rotary steam engine. The materials are arranged by type of document and then chronologically.

Folders 1-3 contain incoming business letters, 1801-1840. The majority concern cases in which Sherman was involved, with several addressing local politics. One of the most interesting letters, from Charles J. McCurdy, 24 September 1824, concerns a fisheries case involving Goose Island. Another letter, this one from Charles Beach and dated 10 May 1834, includes a handwritten copy of the charter of the Fairfield County Turnpike Company.

Incoming personal correspondence, 1811-1840, is organized in Folders 4-5. In most of the letters, sons James and William keep their father up to date on their mother's health. Sherman also received at least one letter from his wife dated 1815 from Ballston (Spa), New York, and one from his sister Betsy (Elizabeth) Mitchell. A letter dated 27 September 1811 from Samuel Partridge had included a packet of parsnip seed which Partridge said would help restore the health of Sherman's son.

Outgoing correspondence in Folder 6, dating 1825-1842, includes a note to Fairfield Selectmen that an Irishman named Michael was living with Sherman.

A copy of Sherman's patent application for a rotary steam engine, 1835, and correspondence and accounts related to the engine are arranged in Folder 7. Sherman wrote to J. B. Wakeman and Henry Ellsworth about the engine, and contracted with William Naramore for work on the device.

Legal papers, 1773-1803, 1845, in Folder 8, include a summons, two writs, and a certificate, all of which probably relate to cases on which Sherman was working. The only exception could be the 1773 document, which is the year he was born. It may, however, relate to a case he took on later in his career.

The final group of papers, bills and receipts, 1810-1840, include transactions related to both his personal and his business life. These documents include a bill for purchasing a horse, having a vest made, and for a subscription to the Black Rock and Weston Turnpike. They are arranged in Folders 9-11.

Ms B96

SHERMAN, ROGER MINOTT (1773-1844)
Papers, 1773-1842

- Folder 1-3. Incoming business correspondence, 1801-1840
- Folder 4-5. Incoming personal correspondence, 1811-1840
- Folder 6. Outgoing correspondence, 1825-1842
- Folder 7. Patent documents and correspondence, 1835-1838
- Folder 8. Legal documents, 1773-1803, 1845
- Folder 9-11. Bills and receipts, 1810-1844

SHERMAN, ROGER MINOTT (1773-1844)
Papers, 1773-1842

Subject headings:

Connecticut--Politics and government

Families--Conn.--Fairfield

Judges--Conn.

Lawyers--Conn.--Fairfield

Patents--Conn.--Fairfield

Sherman, James, 1799-1833

Sherman, William, 1799-1838