



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

### **Manuscript Finding Aid**

Title: Burr, William H. Jr. Papers.

Collection #: Ms B115

Dates: 1833-1937

Size of Collection:

Accession Number: L2003.10

Donor: William H. Burr

Restrictions: None

Processed by: Marilyn Bakker

Date: April 2004

Related collection(s): B20, Burr Family Papers

#### Biographical/ historical note:

Donor William H. Burr (b1930) is the son of Morris Lyon Burr (b1891-d1963) who was the son of William H. Burr Jr. (b1854-d1933) who was the son of William Hanford Burr (b1808-d1880). WHB/1808, son of Zalmon Burr (b1773) and Mary Hanford (b1782) began a Westport fruit and vegetable growing business at 71 Long Lots Road that was continued by WHB/1854 and by his son, Morris Lyon. WHB/1808 married Mary Ann Jennings (b1809), (daughter of Abraham Gould Jennings not sister/per WHBIV) sister of Abraham Gould Jennings (b1821), aunt of Annie Burr Jennings and O.G. Jennings. WHB/1854 married Eliza Matilda Huntington (b1855-d1898). Morris Lyon Burr married Catherine (Burr not Sherwood/per WHBIV) Sherwood (b1896-d1986).

William H. Burr Jr. (WHB/1854) carried on his father's fruit and vegetable growing business in Westport, and was a spirited public citizen as well. He was president

of the Board of the Southport Savings Bank (now part of Peoples Bank), which served the farming community. He was active in the Connecticut and local Fruit and Vegetable Growers Associations and the Greens Farms Farmers Club, and spoke frequently on agricultural topics. He also served as president of Westport's Board of Trade. He was Westport's representative in the General Assembly in 1911; president of the Westport Historical Society and director of the Fairfield Historical Society; and president of the Board of the Westport Library (then a private foundation). A member of the Sons of the American Revolution, he was an avid student of the Revolutionary War, especially the events in Fairfield County. He was a prime mover behind the installation of Westport's Minute Man statue, and gave the dedication address in 1910. He was also instrumental in the development of Putnam Memorial State Park, Redding. He came to be known as the "Father of Sherwood Island State Park" because of his relentless efforts to make the park a reality.

#### Scope and content note:

##### Series A. Farm and household ledgers

Included are Burr-family farm ledgers, account books and diaries from 1862-1930. The ledgers contain farm-specific data about crop prices and shipments, as well as general cash accounts. Some contain diaries of planting, plowing and harvesting, as well as payments to workers. There are also account books of Eliza Matilda Huntington Burr (Lillie), wife of WHB/1854.

##### Series B. Ledgers/journals, special

The diary of WHB/1808 includes farm-ledger data (1833-1844), as well as daily diary notes, 1838-1840, 1845-1848, and at least one hand-written copy of a document from the 1700s (1766, "Things bought for my daughter Elizabeth Burr. Elizabeth was the Spinster daughter of Daniel and Abigail Buckley Burr, b. 1779, sister to Zalmon/1773 and aunt of WHB/1808/per WHBIV). Entries for 11/27/1845 include "was married." Loose inserts: an 1840 letter from New Haven signed by Enoch F. and Zalmon B. (brothers of WHB/1808/per WHBIV), to Dear Mother and Brother. A document concerning land distributed to Sarah Hanford.

Included are account books of young WHB/1854 dated 1873-1877; Eliza Matilda Huntington Burr (mother (wife/per WHB IV) of WHB/1854 aka Lillie) dated 1880-1896; and Mary Hanford Burr (sister of WHB/1854) dated 1903-1905, including stock/bond holdings.

##### Series C. Morris W. Lyon papers

The collection contains materials from Morris Wakeman Lyon (b1826-d1906), an uncle of Eliza Matilda Huntington, (brother-in-law of her father Enoch Smith Huntington/per WHBIV) a brother of her father Enoch Smith Huntington. In addition to account books and notebooks, there are letters dated 1902-1903 from O.G. Jennings and others pertaining to the construction of the Fairfield Library. The others include C.T. Beardsley Jr. architect, and individuals including Ward, Sturges, Rowland, Schenck.

Included are letters from Bella (Mrs.) Lyon to the Burr family; an account book from 1873-1881 (loose insert, note about Burr Lyon homestead); an account book from 1885-1900; and a notebook (ca 1896) with recollections: History of Fairfield, family recollections, notes about Slave Priam Burr, notes about library inventory. Loose insert: Greatest events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Series D. William H. Burr Jr. papers pertaining to Sherwood Island State Park

In 1914, WHB/1854 began working with the Connecticut State Park Commission (CSPC), later renamed the Connecticut State Park and Forest Commission (CSPFC), on the acquisition of parcels of land for Sherwood Island State Park. The acquisition process became a matter of great controversy in the early 1920s, when neighboring landowners tried to stop the development of the park. The park's future was not guaranteed until 1937, after the death of WHB/1854 in 1933.

Folders 1-4 contain correspondence: mainly letters to Mr. Burr, with a few copies of letters from him to others. Included in folder 1 (1914-1919) are letters from the CSPC. Envelope: Map of Property at Alvord Beach, dated 12/21/14. Included in folder 2 (1920-1923) are letters from the CSPFC, as well as correspondence with E.T. Bedford about the possible purchase of his land, and road construction, and the Westport YMCA. Included in folder 3 (1924) are letters from the CSPFC. Documents concerning the Fairfield County Planning Association (FCPA) and its formation of the State Park Realty Association; correspondence with Judge John Perry and Annie Burr Jennings (at Sunnie-Holme) about a possible land purchase, and a booklet published in 1925 by the FCPA and the Connecticut Forestry Association (CFA), which was later renamed Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA). Included in folder 4 (1930-1937) is correspondence of Morris Lyon Burr and the CSPFC and the CFPA, and documents concerning the Sherwood Island Park Association. Folder 5 contains miscellaneous documents, including a map of the properties prepared by A.S. Huntington. Folder 6 contains copies of newspaper clippings pertaining to the controversy.

#### Series E. William H. Burr Jr. papers, miscellaneous

Folders 1-3 contain speeches and writings by WHB/1854 on history and farming. Folder 3 contains a photograph of WHB/1854. Included in folder 4 are letters from Abraham Gould Jennings on letterhead of the Jennings Lace Works, Brooklyn NY dated 1896-1903. Envelope contains other family letters. Included in folder 5 are miscellaneous papers, including clippings about the Huntington Bridge (one with an article about Fairfield's historic oak), information on Gen. Henry Judah. Folder 6. General Assembly, State of CT, 1799: An Act for appointing, regulating and encouraging schools. Folder 7: Early delicate papers include: Prayers or sermons, probably by Hezakah Ripley, Greens Farms Church Funeral sermon by H. Ripley for Abigail Burr, wife of Zalmon Burr, age 19, December 1798 Part of an estate distribution, apparently in lower Greens Farms List and tax, 1808, probably West Parish Fairfield Sherwood (A?) list for 1809, probably tax assessment values. 2/23, Found this document -- 1910: WHB was president of the Israel Putnam Memorial Camp Ground Commission. Wrote to Governor about it -- said "I shall be in the house this coming term." Check which folder.

Organization and arrangement

Series A. Farm ledgers, 1862-1930 (boxes I-IV)

Box I

- Folder 1. Farm and household ledger 1913-1919
- Folder 2. Farm ledger 1914-1930

Box II

- Folder 1. Farm ledger 1879-1885
- Folder 2. Three farm ledgers 1876-1878
- Folder 3. Two farm ledgers: 1879-1882; 1882-1887
- Folder 4. Farm ledger 1886-1898
- Folder 5. WHB Jr. farm accounts 1888-1898
- Folder 6. Burr & Wakeman railroad shipment receipts 1888
- Folder 7. Shellfish Commission Annual Reports - 1895, 1898.

Box III

- Folder 1. W.H. Burr daily farm diary 1880-1885
- Folder 2. Farm ledger 1862-1875
- Folder 3. Farm ledger 1883-1897
- Folder 4. Farm ledger 1897-1905

Box IV

- Folder 1. Farm and household ledger 1899-1905
- Folder 2. Burr & Wakeman Pier 50 NY, shipments by farmers
- Series B. Ledgers/journals, special (box V)

Box V

- Folder 1. Diary of WHB/1808
- Folder 2. Young WHB/1854 diary and account book 1873-1877
- Folder 3. Accounts of Eliza Matilda Huntington Burr (Lillie) 1880-1896.
- Folder 4. Accounts of Mary Hanford Burr 1903-1905.

Series C. Morris W. Lyon papers (box VI)

Box VI

- Folder 1. Letters pertaining to the Fairfield Library.
- Folder 2. Letters from Bella (Mrs.) Lyon to Burr family
- Folder 3. Accounts 1873-1881
- Folder 4. Accounts 1885-1900
- Folder 5. Notebook (ca 1896)

Series D. William H. Burr Jr. papers pertaining to Sherwood Island State Park (box VII)

Box VII

- Folder 1: 1914-1919.
- Folder 2: 1920-1923.
- Folder 3: 1924.

Folder 4: 1930-1937.

Folder 5: Miscellaneous documents.

Folder 6: Newspaper clippings, copies.

Note: There is still a separate roll of full newspaper pages.

Series E. William H. Burr Jr. papers, miscellaneous (box VIII)

#### Box VIII

Folder 1. WHB/1854 speeches and writings on history

Folder 2. WHB/1854 speeches and writings on farming

Folder 3. WHB/1854 photograph and miscellaneous speeches and writings

Folder 4. Letters from Abraham Gould Jennings

Folder 5. Miscellaneous papers

Folder 6. General Assembly, State of CT, 1799: An Act

Folder 7: Early delicate papers