

Connecticut Historical Society
museum & library

Clara M. Beckley papers

A Guide to the collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

Collection Overview

Repository:	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
Creator :	Beckley, Clara M.
Title :	Clara M. Beckley Papers
Dates :	1848 - ca. 1958
Extent :	1 linear foot (2 boxes)
Location:	Ms 69666
Language:	English

Biographical Sketch

Clara Beckley, a librarian, genealogist, and historian, was a native of New York. Born on 5 January 1880, Clara's main research concern was the genealogy of her family and the development of her grandfather's iron foundries in New England. John Adam Beckley (2 September 1808 - 14 June 1874) was pivotal to the expansion of the early New England iron industry. He brought his expertise to East Canaan, Connecticut, where he opened a furnace in 1837.

An ancestor of John Adam Beckley, Richard Beckley, was an iron producer in Sussex, England before coming to New England circa 1635. Arriving first in New Haven, Connecticut, Richard Beckley later purchased land near Wethersfield, Connecticut from the Mata-bee-set Indians. The area is now known as Beckley Quarter.

John Adam Beckley built, owned, leased, and operated several charcoal pig-iron furnaces in Harlem Valley, New York; Massachusetts; Connecticut; and Vermont. Working with his son, James Beckley (14 October 1839 - 10 March 1888), and grandson, Samuel Groat Beckley (11 April 1863 - ca. 1928), John became an award-winning manufacturer. In 1866 the American Institute at New York awarded John Beckley a gold medal for, according to Clara Beckley, "making the best iron in this country and, in fact, the best iron in the world." During the Civil War the forge in North Adams, Massachusetts produced iron that plated the U.S.S. Monitor

After the death of John Adam Beckley, James Beckley and Samuel Groat Beckley continued running the family businesses. James was married to Adeline Groat. Their children included Samuel Groat (d. 1928), Lizzie Monson (31 January 1865 - ca. 1932), and Clara.

Scope and Content

This collection has been divided into two series: the genealogical research of Clara Beckley (Box 1) and the primary sources she gathered related to her family's iron foundries (Box 2). Within each box, folders have been arranged alphabetically according to the type of document and main focus of the material. Within each folder the documents are arranged chronologically. If the date of production could not be ascertained, the documents were then placed in the back of the folder.

Series I: Clara Beckley genealogical research This series houses the personal papers and genealogical research material of Clara Beckley. The majority of the documents were written by Beckley between 1940 and 1958. Personal correspondence, from 1940 to 1957, details Clara's research requests and her effort to make the extant Beckley family furnaces permanent historical monuments. Photographs in the collection focus primarily on Beckley homes and businesses, as well as Clara herself. One folder is devoted to he Beckley's involvement with the original construction of the Civil War era U.S.S. Monitor.

Series II: Business transactions Documents related to the day-to-day business transactions of the Beckley furnaces may be found in Series II. Much of the material was sent to and from John Adam Beckley between 1876 and 1888. Additionally, the collection contains memoranda (1880s), Supreme Court documents (1876-1890), bills of sale (1866-1884), and original building plans for the S. Boston Iron Co. in Dover, Massachusetts (1881). Personal items of John Adam Beckley include medicinal recipes, fractional currency, and a notebook.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Use Restrictions

Use of the material requires compliance with the Connecticut Historical Society's Research Center regulations.

Subject Headings

Personal Names

Beckley, John Adam, 1808-1874.
Forbes, Samuel.

Family Names

Beckley family.

Subjects

Genealogy.
Iron foundries -- Connecticut -- East Caanan.
Iron foundries -- Research

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (Box #, Folder #). Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

Processing Details

Collection was processed by Zac Mirecki in 2009.

EAD Finding Aid created June 2012.

Accruals

The collection is closed.

Contents:

I. Clara Beckley genealogical research

Box	Folder	
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1	1	CT Society of Civil Engineers Annual Report, 1935-1944
1	2	Papers related to funerary monuments/historical markers, n.d.

1	3	Genealogy of John Adam Beckley, 1896-1949, n.d.
1	4	Negatives, ca. 1940s, n.d.
1	5	"New England Journeys" booklets, 1953
1	6	Personal Correspondence, ca. 1940s-1957
1	7	Personal research material and photocopies, n.d.
1	8	Photographs of Beckley related homes and furnaces, ca. 1935-1955, n.d.
1	9	Publications related to Iron production, 1920-1938, n.d.
1	10	Clara Beckley's published writings/personal papers, 1945-1951, n.d.
1	11	Papers regarding U.S.S. Monitor, 1861-1950, n.d.

II. Business transactions

Box Folder

2	1	Abstract of Search against John Adam Beckley, 1882.
2	2	Bills of Sale, 1866-1884
2	3	Bonds, 1876-1884
2	4	Building Plans, 1881
2	5	Business Correspondence, 1876-1888, n.d.
2	6	Contracts, 1862-1887
2	7	Papers on CT iron industry, 1896-1945.
2	8	Deeds, ca. 1866-1880s, n.d.
2	9	Indentures, 1873-1887
2	10	Insurance Statements, 1888, n.d.
2	11	Leases, 1877-1887
2	12	Lyles Family home material, ca. 1950s, n.d.
2	13	Memoranda, ca. 1880s, n.d.
2	14	Mortgages, 1873-1877, n.d.
2	15	Notices of Incorporation, 1884.
2	16	Personal Notebooks and Papers, ca. 1840s-1880s, n.d.
2	17	Receipts and Promissory Notes, 1848-1894, n.d.
2	18	Papers related to Samuel Forbes, ca. 1895-1950s, n.d.
2	19	Supreme Court documents/ Last Wills and Testaments, 1876-1890, n.d.
2	20	Trade Cards, ca. 1860s-1900s, n.d.