

Connecticut Historical Society
museum & library

Bronson and Munsill family papers

A Guide to the collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

Collection Overview

Repository:	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
Creator :	Bronson and Munsill families
Title :	Bronson and Munsill Family Papers
Dates :	1821-1882
Extent :	0.25 linear feet (1/2 box)
Location:	Ms 84958
Language:	English

Biographical Sketch

Isaac Bronson of Winchester, Connecticut (22 Jan 1776 - 13 Jan 1849), married Eliza Hills on September 18, 1800. They had seven children including Theron (20 March 1809 - 20 Jan 1873).

Levi Munsill was born in Newfield, Connecticut and resided in Winchester and Torrington (9 Sep 1775 - 1 May 1883). He married Rachel Marshall (b.19 June 1781) on December 19, 1799. They had six children including Marcus (13 Oct 1800 - 12 Nov 1885), Serepta (28 Dec 1803 - 1877), Hiram (28 May 1809 - 9 Aug 1841), and Maria Rachel (b. 28 Apr 1819).

Theron Bronson, son of Isaac, married Maria Rachel Munsill, daughter of Levi, on July 7, 1841 and they resided in Winchester. They had five children including William M. (b. 9 June 1848), Elliot B. (b. 7 Aug 1858) and Carrie (b. 17 Jan 1863).

Marcus Munsill, son of Levi, married Charlotte Eno and they also resided in Winchester. They had a daughter Anna Marie (9 Dec 1838 - 1 Mar 1873).

The Reverend Ira Pettibone, from Orwell, VT (8 Sep 1801- 11 June 1889) married Louisa Welch (28 Mar 1801- 8 Apr 1865) on October 4, 1830 and they resided in Norfolk, Connecticut. Among their children were Henry Martyn (14 Apr 1838 - 1 Aug 1841) and Benjamin (b. 6 May 1840).

Benjamin Pettibone, son of Ira, married Anna Marie Munsill, daughter of Marcus, on September 26, 1866. They resided in Norfolk, CT.

Philomela Pettibone of Norfolk, CT, daughter of Philo and Sarah Gaylord, was born on 13 March 1805 and died 2 February 1846.

Anna M. Bronson was born in 1824 and died in 1881.

Scope and Content

The Bronson and Munsill family papers contain correspondence and papers relating to most of the people named above. The folders have been organized by person in chronological order. They contain mostly letters received and written, though there are miscellaneous deeds, receipts, and a lock of hair.

Isaac Bronson was the largest land owner in Winchester as well as a Justice of the Peace and Representative in the General Assembly. His papers are the most numerous. Many of them are letters from Levi Skinner in Vernon, NY. Mr. Skinner was acting as Isaac's power of attorney in trying to sell a piece of Isaac's land in Vernon.

Isaac was a large dealer in dairy products. Bronson, Munsill and Co. sold dairy products around Connecticut and New York. Various letters from buyers in the 1840's show haggling over prices and complaints about their cheese being "inferior" and not what was promised.

There is one letter between the two patriarchs of this family tree—Isaac Bronson and Levi Munsill. In it, Isaac pledges \$50 to help build the new meetinghouse in Newfield but expects to be repaid by the end of the third year.

Marcus Munsill was a one-time school teacher in Torrington. One of his letters to his father relates his first days there as he boasts about how he reformed the school and how he has "one little lousy squaw" he keeps on a box under his desk. Marcus' brother Hiram moved to Philadelphia and wrote to his brother and father about his life there and travels among the "Dutch". There is a touching letter from Hiram to Marcus where Hiram talks of learning of their father's death from E. Bronson. In fact, E. Bronson had also written to Marcus to tell him he ran into Hiram and Hiram had not yet heard about Levi's death. Hiram tragically met his end on the Mississippi River at Plumb Bend Point, MS and was buried in Osceola, AR.

Though Hiram died in August of 1841, it must have been under unusual circumstances. His mother Rachel received a letter dated February 9, 1842 from C.L. Packard asking about the rumors of Hiram's death at Plumb Point Bend and hoping it was not true.

Serepta Munsill never married but her folder is full of letters, particularly to two sisters, Esther and Emeline.

Louisa Welch Pettibone's sons were quite successful. One letter to her friend "Mrs. W." mentions Louisa's son Asa "accepting the offer at Norfolk". In fact, he became the first Cashier of Norfolk bank and afterwards it's President. Another son, Ira Welch Pettibone, graduated Yale and was Colonel of the Tenth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers during the Civil War. Louisa's folder contains a wrapped up lock of her son Henry Martyn Pettibone's hair for "his dear grandma". Sadly, Henry died at only three years of age.

Philomela Pettibone could not be fit into the family tree but her folder contains letters she received from friends and cousins. She attended Andover Theological Seminary and one of her letters from there mentions the infamous 1837 murder of the Reverend E. P. Lovejoy saying "this death will accomplish more for abolition than his life."

Theron Bronson's sons William and Elliot began the Bronson Brothers, a lumber company. A letter from Elliot to a younger sibling is written on Bronson Brothers' stationery. Their sister Carrie received letters from friends and an invitation to a party in town, though there is no hint she would end up being committed. The 1910 census shows her being an inmate at Ward 7 in Hartford, a forerunner to the Institute of Living.

Anna M. Bronson of Winchester could not be fit into the family tree but there are letters referencing her as a teacher. It's believed she is the same Anna M. Bronson who became the first "lady principal" of the Elmira Female College at Elmira, NY. She served in that position from 1858 until her death in 1881. Now Elmira College, there was a plaque dedicated to her hanging in a chapel in Cowles Hall.

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

Bronson, Anna, 1824-1881.
Bronson, Carrie, b. 1863.
Bronson, Isaac, 1776-1849
Lovejoy, Elijah P. (Elijah Parish), 1802-1837
Munsill, Hiram, 1809-1841
Munsill, Levi, 1775-1883
Munsill, Marcus, 1800-1885
Munsill, Serepta, 1803-1877
Pettibone, Louisa Welch, 1801-1865

Family Names

Munsill family.
Pettibone family.

Corporate Names

Andover Theological Seminary..

Subjects

Diaries -- Connecticut -- Winchester.
Teachers -- Connecticut -- Torrington
Women educators -- Connecticut

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

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

Processing Details

Collection was processed by Marie Jarry in 2010.

EAD Finding Aid created July 2012.

Accruals

The collection is closed.

Contents:

I. Papers

Box	Folder	
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1	1	Isaac Bronson papers, 1821-1834
1	2	Serepta Munsill correspondence, 1822-1839
1	3	Philomela Pettibone and Louisa Welch Pettibone correspondence, 1822-1857
1	4	Levi Munsill correspondence, 1823-1833
1	5	Marcus Munsill correspondence, 1831-1833
1	6	Hiram Munsill correspondence, 1831
1	7	Rachel Munsill correspondence, 1833-1842
1	8	Bronson and Munsill dairy correspondence, 1844-1845
1	9	Anna Bronson correspondence, 1855-1856
1	10	Carrie Bronson correspondence, 1879-1862
1	11	Elliot B. Bronson correspondence, November 25, 1882
1	12	Unidentifiable papers and letters