



BHC-MSS 0253
Guide to the Burroughs Family Papers
By Jaime Pettit
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Burroughs Family

Title: Burroughs Family Papers

Dates: 1795-1882

Quantity: 1 manuscript box; 0.42 linear feet

Abstract: The collection contains a series of legal and financial papers relating to the Burroughs family, particularly the papers of Stephen, Isaac, and Abijah Burroughs as well as Catherine A. Pettengill, benefactress of the Bridgeport Public Library.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library

Administrative History:

The Burroughs family was a prominent one in the history of Bridgeport, having been settled in the state of Connecticut for longer than the city's existence. The Burroughs line has produced a notable number of individuals in the four centuries the family has lived in the Nutmeg state. The documents held in this collection give insight into their financial and legal dealings.

Capt. Stephen Burroughs, the first recorded patriarch of the Burroughs family in Bridgeport, was born on October 4th, 1729 in Stratford, Connecticut. He is described by his descendent, Lewis Amos Burroughs as "a strictly cold-water man, was never sick a day in his life." Captain Burroughs was a successful merchant, farmer, sailor, ship builder, ship-owner, and navigator. He took part in the West India trade before and after the American Revolution. He built the first store within the city of Bridgeport, upon a wharf that he owned. He served as captain in the Connecticut militia where he raised a militia company called Householders, and was a member of the Connecticut General Assembly. He was also an individual of many talents, being a surveyor, astronomer, and a mathematician. He invented the system of Federal money which was adopted by Congress in 1790, and is now used in the United States. In his old age, he also made some remarkable discoveries in astronomy, but his biography reads that he "was taken blind before he had completed his work, and it was lost to the world." Stephen married twice. The first was to Elizabeth Browne, with whom he had three children before her death in 1764. His second marriage was to Huldah Pixlee, herself a widow, in 1765. The couple had five children together, including Isaac Burroughs. Stephen died on August 2nd, 1817, at the age of 88, and was buried in Old Stratfield Cemetery.

Capt. Isaac Burroughs, born October 15th, 1775 in Stratford, was the third son and fifth child of Stephen and Huldah Burroughs. Like his father, he was also a sea captain, as well as a navigator and ship owner. In addition, he owned extensive real estate in Bridgeport, including about fifteen acres upon Bridgeport Harbor, running back to East Main Street. He was also a director in the old Bridgeport Bank. A lifelong Whig and Republican, he represented Bridgeport in the Connecticut

State Legislature. He was also warden of St. John's Episcopal Church, of which he was a devout member and supporter. He married Rebecca Hurd of Old Mill, CT. Together, they has six children, including Abijah Burroughs and Catherine Burroughs. He died on January 11th, 1861, and is buried in Mountain Grove Cemetery.

Abijah Burroughs, was born on August 13th, 1807, to Isaac and Huldah Burroughs in Bridgeport. There is very little biographical information about Abijah. However, in an 1860 Federal Census, his occupation is listed as a merchant, and it can be assumed he was successful in continuing his family's business of owning shops and real estate. Probate records also show that at the time of his death, he was the owner of the original Burroughs Building, which was willed to his sister Catherine and her husband, Alison A. Pettengill. He died on August 6th, 1879 with no wife or children, and is buried in Mountain Grove Cemetery next to his deceased siblings.

Catherine Burroughs Pettengill was born on September 12th, 1809, to Isaac and Huldah Burroughs in Bridgeport. Known for her charity, she is credited with providing funds for the restoration of a chapel located to the north of St. John's Episcopal Church. She married Alison A. Pettengill, a prominent Bridgeport politician and newspaper editor of the *Bridgeport Daily Standard*. The couple had no children. Catherine Burroughs died on January 7th, 1883. In her will, she bequeathed the valuable Burroughs building to the Bridgeport Public Library, so that the institution may have a permanent home. The Burroughs building remained the home of the library for over 40 years. A decision was made by the city to have the Burroughs library moved in 1924 in order to respond to growing demand, despite protests from Catherine's relative and executor James Burroughs.

Scope and Content:

This box of materials contains six folders of legal documents and correspondence relating to the Burroughs family ranging from 1795-1882. Received from the estate of Charlotte Moore, this collection contains a number of deeds, leases, estate papers, bonds, as well as legal and financial papers. These papers primarily belonged to Isaac Burroughs, Abijah Burroughs, Catherine Burroughs Pettengill, and her husband Alison A. Pettengill. All of the papers are in good to excellent condition.

Arrangement notes:

Materials are arranged by type, with each folder containing documents that have been arranged chronologically. The first two folders contain estate papers of the Burroughs family. The third and fourth folders contain deeds. The fifth folder contains leases, and the sixth folder contains financial and legal papers. Item level description by folder is provided.

Preferred Citation:

Burroughs Family Papers (BHC-MSS 0252), Bridgeport History Center

Names and Subject Tracings

Corporate names

Bridgeport Public Library (Bridgeport, Conn.)

Personal names

Burroughs, Abijah, 1807-1879

Burroughs, Isaac, 1775-1861

Burroughs, Stephen, 1729-1817

Pettengill, Catherine A., 1809-1883

Subject Tracings
Families and libraries
Libraries

Box 1

Folder 1

Estate Papers

1. Estate papers of Abijah Burroughs (1879, 1880)
2. Estate papers of Isaac Burroughs (undated)
3. Estate papers of Stephen Burroughs (undated)
4. Estate papers of A.A. Pettengill, W.B. Hincks, administrator (undated)

Folder 2

Bonds

1. Germania Petroleum Company Bond
2. New York Petroleum Company Bond
3. Silver Hill Mining Co. Bond
4. New York and Liverpool Petroleum Company Bond
5. Petroleum Consolidated Bond
6. Connecticut Arizona Mining Company Bond
7. Belmont Silver Mining Company Bond
8. Belmont Silver Mining Company Bond

Folder 3

Deeds

1. Deed to David Burroughs from Richard and Amos Hubbell (1795)
2. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Stephen Burroughs Jr. (1813)
3. Deed to William DeForest and Isaac Burroughs from Eunice Lemen (1814)
4. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from William DeForest (1814)
5. Deed to Rebecca Burroughs from Andrew Hurd (1816)
6. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Peter Hawley (1819)
7. Deeds to Isaac Burroughs from Ashael Hurd (1827)
8. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Abigail Phipps (1827)
9. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Seth B. Jones et al. (1828)
10. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from John Bartlett (1829)
11. Deed to Abijah Burroughs from John Johnson (1837)
12. Deed to Abijah Burroughs from Isaac H. Whiting (1837)
13. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from William Allen (1838)
14. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from William C. Vans (1839, 1840)
15. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Sidney B. Rogers (1839, 1842)
16. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Emily B. Banks (1844)

17. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from City of Bridgeport et al. (1846, 1849)
18. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from New York, New Haven Railroad et al. (1849)
19. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Alfred Bishop (1848)

Folder 4

Deeds

1. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Elizabeth Edwards (1852)
2. Deed to Rebecca Burroughs from Abijah Burroughs (1852)
3. Deed to Abijah Burroughs from Isaac Burroughs (1853)
4. Deeds to Isaac Burroughs from Elizabeth Edwards (1853)
5. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from Oswald Backus (1855)
6. Deed to Isaac Burroughs from George Sterling (1863)
7. Deed to Catherine Pettengill from Isaac and Abijah Burroughs (1863)
8. Deed to Abijah & Isaac Burroughs from Alison A. & Catherine Pettengill (1863)
9. Deed to Abijah & Isaac Burroughs from Julius Hawley (1867)
10. Deed to Catherine Pettengill from Abijah & Isaac Burroughs (1868)
11. Deed to Abijah & Isaac Burroughs from Alison A. & Catherine Pettengill (1870)
12. Deed to Catherine Pettengill from Russell Tomlinson (1869)
13. Deed to Abijah Burroughs from Alison A. & Catherine Pettengill (1870)
14. Deed to Abijah Burroughs from J. Fredrick Huges (1871)
15. Deed to Abijah Burroughs from Samuel Brunkes (1871)
16. Deed to Abijah Burroughs from Catherine A. Pettengill (1872)
17. Daniel W. Sherwood from Abijah Burroughs and Catherine Pettengill (1873)
18. Deed to Charles P. Porter from Abijah Burroughs and Catherine Pettengill (1881)

Folder 5

Leases

1. Lease to Isaac Burroughs from Isaac DeForest (1846)
2. Lease to Sammis Fairchild from Abijah Burroughs (1873)
3. Lease to Henry R. Chaffee et al from Abijah Burroughs (1878)
4. Lease to Charles E. Husted from Alison A. & Catherine Pettengill (1879)
5. Lease to Russel T. Whiting from Catherine A. Pettengill (1882)
6. Lease to George Douglas et al. from Catherine A. Pettengill (1882)

Folder 6

Financial and Legal Papers

1. Promissory notes from J. Fredrick Huges (1871, 1876)
2. Promissory notes from Ellsworth Mills to Catherine Pettengill (1873)
3. Receipt to Isaac Burroughs from R.L. Nichols (1846)
4. Will of Alison A. Pettengill (1884)
5. Writ: Abijah Burroughs vs. Ahaz Oakley (1868, 1879)
6. Writ: Estate of J. Frederick Huges vs. estate of Abijah Burroughs (1881)
7. Unidentified map (n.d.)