

## Lacey Family Collection

**COLLECTION, MS B52**

**DATE**

1790 – 1909

**CONTRIBUTOR**

Fairfield Museum

**ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY ELEMENT**

The collection contains items pertaining to the Lacey family, descended from Edward and Sarah Lacey, early settlers and farmers at Stratfield Parish before 1694. Early family members included several Captains who served in the Revolutionary War. Members of the family later settled the Plattsville area of Fairfield (around Sport Hill Road and the Mill River), operating a tanning and shoemaking business, and then the Lacey Fulling and Grist Mill of brothers John and Michael (sons of Capt. Daniel Lacey), and later a carriage repair business of Michael B. Lacey at Plattsville. Also included are items pertaining to Capt. Daniel Lacey's sawmill and carding business located in Weston; Fairfield schools including the Plattsville, Deerfield and Hoyden's Hill schools as well as Long Hill School in Monroe, CT. Included are deeds, legal documents, estate papers, account books, text books, practice books, record books, bibles, prayer books and photographs. The first Lacey home, the "old first homestead" was located in Stratfield Parish, before some of the family members located to the area known as Plattsville. This land, part of early Fairfield, would have been part of the Long Lots distributions divided among the early settlers of Fairfield in the late 17th century, as the lot dividends for this area extended into what is now Easton, well beyond the Plattsville area. Plattsville, which no longer exists, was the area around Sport Hill Road and the Mill River at the first Cross Highway. It was located at corner of Congress Street and Easton Turnpike, in north Fairfield. The village was destroyed in the 1930s when the Merritt Parkway was built, and is now the area of exit 46 of the Parkway, called Sport Hill Road/Route 59. Up until the parkway changed the landscape, the village of Plattsville consisted only of the Lacey Mills, Platt's Mill, a schoolhouse, "the old store" with a saddlery and shoe making shop upstairs, and just a few houses. Plattsville was just down Congress Street from the area known as Wilson's Mill District. Named for Samuel Wilson, the first settler there, it was home to three generations of the Wilson family and the location of a sawmill known as Wilson's Mill, Wilson's gun factory where the first rifle in Fairfield County was made and the Wilson's Mill school where Minnie Lewis Lacey was later the first schoolteacher. This Wilson family may have been the family of John Lacey's wife Eunice, one or both of Michael Lacey's wives, Racilla or Elizabeth and/or Ann Elizabeth "Lizzie" Wilson, the wife of Michael and Racilla's son, Michael B. Lacey. Edward and Sarah, the first known Lacey settlers in the area, had three sons and three daughters. The three sons of Edward and Sarah were Edward Jr, b. 1676, John, b. 1678 and Henry b. before 1694. The three daughters were Elizabeth, Sarah and Mary, whose birth dates are unknown. They settled in the Stratfield area of Fairfield before 1694, when they baptized all six of their children at once at Stratfield Parish. They may have come to Fairfield from Salem, Massachusetts. All Lacey family members in the Fairfield, Connecticut area, upstate New York, and Laceyville, Pennsylvania, descended from these six children of Edward and Sarah. The descendants include many captains, officers and soldiers in the Revolutionary War including Captain Josiah, Captain Daniel, Captain David and Corporal Zachariah Lacey. The first Lacey who left Stratfield Parish and settled on the Plattsville homestead land seems to have been Benjamin Lacey, the son of Hannah Booth and David Lacey (who died in Albany in 1756 during the French and Indian War). Benjamin was the brother of Capt. Josiah Lacey, a captain in the Revolution who answered the Lexington Alarm, and later became the Guardian of the Golden Hill Paugussett tribe as well as a member of the Connecticut House of Representatives. Benjamin was a tanner, currier and shoemaker. He married Margaret Hall and had three children – David, Molly and Eleanor. His shop is said to have been "at his homestead near the Mill River stream and ponds near Congress Street", and was located there before the Revolutionary war. He supposedly relocated to this land from the original family homestead in Stratfield due to the need for water for his tanning business. His son David succeeded his father at the homestead and continued in the shoemaking business, known as "David Lacey the shoemaker". (The shoe making bench of either David, or his father Benjamin is now in the collection of the Fairfield Museum and History Center). Both Benjamin the shoemaker and Captain Daniel of Weston were great grandsons of Edward, the original Stratfield settler. At least three of their sons ended up occupying the Lacey Family homestead at the same time together in Plattsville, while running their individual businesses at the mills and workshops. Capt. Daniel Lacey was the son of John Lacey and Mary Hubbell, born about 1743 at Stratfield. Daniel was a captain in the Revolutionary War who ran a sawmill in Weston, then part of Fairfield - and lived there his entire life. He was "captain over all the companies of Guards, stationed during the Revolution, from Division street to Saugatuck river". He married Tabitha Hubbell, daughter of Jabez and Sarah Hubbell. They had 5 children, John, Daniel Jr., Sarah, Michael and Squire. Daniel's sons, John and Michael, cousins of "David the shoemaker", removed to this same Plattsville family homestead by 1800, when John purchased the fulling mill located adjacent to the original Lacey property on the Mill River stream from Ashbel Steel. The fulling mill was next to Steel's grist mill and was property formerly owned by Daniel Glover of Weston. The 1800 deed for the property included limitations on water rights from the pond, allowing use of the water for fulling only if there was water sufficient to run both mills. The grist mill was also eventually purchased by one of the Lacey residents, as in later years there are mentions of their grist mill on the property, and several account books listing work done at this mill. The village of Plattsville had been named for Platt's Mill, a short distance "up the stream" which also had existed there since before the Revolution. "Between the Lacey Mill and Platt's mill upstream, there was a cobblers workshop". This was probably the shoe and boot making shop location of Benjamin and his son David. The saddlery shop mentioned above the old store may have also been a Lacey family business, as several Lacey men, including John's son Urban, were listed as saddlers. Following the 1800 fulling mill purchase, there would have been at least three Lacey families living at the Plattsville homestead – the families of cousins David, John and Michael. David Lacey married Katherine Silliman. They had five children – Ruth, Ellen, Benjamin, David Jr. and Eleazer. Ruth and Ellen may have never married, as they were living together well into their sixties, with no children. Son Benjamin married Margaret "Peggy" Weeks and had one son, Charles. David Jr. married Laura Burr and had two children, George and Cornelia. Eleazer, who there is no information on marriage or children for, served in the war of 1812, and was probably the Eleazer Lacey who owned a lumber yard in Bridgeport. John married Eunice Wilson, daughter of Daniel Wilson II. They had a son Robert, who lived only until 22, and Urban, who married Mary Ann Sherwood. Urban and Mary Ann had Eugenia G. who married Joseph Hallock and moved to New York City. Michael Lacey married Betsey Wilson, daughter of Robert Wilson Jr. and Eunice Morehouse Wilson. They had Daniel F. and Levi L. Lacey.

Michael's second wife was Racilla Wilson, whose parents are unknown. They had Michael Benjamin Lacey, the subject of most of the later family papers. Michael and Racilla's only child, Charles Clinton Lacey was the last family member to live at the Lacey homestead before it was destroyed, ending 180 years or more of the family living at the Plattsville homestead location. Capt. Daniel as well as his sons Michael and John are the subject of the majority of the early 19th century papers and most of the early account books. The brothers partnered in the fulling and grist mill businesses and shared many account books recording the daily work and barter at the mills. At the same time, as their father Capt. Daniel was active in his sawmill business in Weston, they worked at his Weston saw mill and at his carding shop. (The carding shop may have been located at the Plattsville mill complex near the fulling and grist mill, rather than in Weston at the saw mill). His sons John and Michael both worked at carding long before fulling, evidenced by the earliest of their account books, which contain accounts of carding work done while only teenagers. Many of the account books also refer to John, Michael and Squire all doing sawmill work at various times, as well as farming, shoe and boot making, odd jobs and grist mill work. The sawmill of Capt. Daniel, his carding machine and shop and his many acres of "Saw Mill Wood" in Weston, which included dam and water privileges, were eventually sold by his grandsons Levi (son of Michael) and Urban (son of John) in 1836 to John Staples. Capt. Daniel's sons John and Michael continued to run the mill together until Michael's death in 1835. Their brother Squire Lacey, who married Julia Hall, seemed to work at the mills at times but only lived until the age of 30. Another brother Daniel Jr., who married Mary Woodhull, the daughter of Abraham Cooper Woodhull of Fairfield, left the area early on to settle in Niagara County, New York. Daughter Sarah married Ephraim Seely Sherwood as his second wife. The sons of the brothers Michael and John - Urban, Levi L. and Michael B. grew up at the Plattsville homestead, and all worked at times at the mills. They worked on the mill machines - as well as farming and some of the side businesses such as boot making, shoe making and saddlery, which were part of the extended families businesses in and around the Plattsville Mill, Wilson's Mill and Capt. Daniel's saw mill in Weston. Urban does not seem to have been as involved with the family mills although he would have inherited his father John's ownership in the mill in the late 1850s. He was listed as a farmer in census listings, with his land located next to the Lacey Mill property home of Michael. He was also a saddler, and may have been the person who had the workshop above the village store. Michael and Betsey Lacey's son Levi L. Lacey died young, at the age of 33. Aside from him inheriting his father's property, there is little information. Upon the death of Michael he left his son Levi his interest in his father Daniel's carding machine and shop, and his part of Daniel's dye shop and water powered sawmill to son Daniel. He may have left his portion of the fulling and grist mill business to his son Michael B., as the business seemed to have been continued by Michael B. after the death of both his father and Uncle John. The fulling mill eventually ceasing business sometime between 1880 and 1890, when Michael B. began his carriage and wagon repair business and large industries took over the production of wool textiles. The Platt family, who were related by marriage to the Lacey family, also resided and had their businesses at this Plattsville location. Michael B. Lacey may have leased the mill to George Platt at one point, or even made him a partner in the business. The mill businesses of the Lacey family and the Platts seemed to intertwine at many times, with George Platt sharing account books at one point with Michael B. Lacey, and a letter addressed to Michael B. at "Platt's Mill". Michael B. Lacey, the subject of most of the late 19th century papers, was the son of Michael and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Wilson Lacey. Michael B. grew up at the Plattsville mill homestead run by his father Michael and Uncle John, and also did work for his grandfather Capt. Daniel at his Weston sawmill. He lived at the family homestead for most of his life, carrying on the fulling and grist mill business of his father and uncle's for many years, while also farming the family land. Michael B. was a "man of all trades". As a young man he was a bootmaker (occupation listed in the 1850 census) and did carding work for his grandfather. By 1860, in the census he was listed as a miller, working at the Lacey fulling and grist mill, as well as his grandfather Daniel's saw mill. He seemed to have worked multiple jobs through the years at the family mills, doing whatever work was available at the time. After business at the fulling mill ceased, he ran a carriage and wagon repair business on the family property. In his late years he was very involved in Fairfield town business, politics and education. He was a Fairfield Selectman, Assessor, Commissioner of Education and State Legislator in the Connecticut House of Representatives. Michael B. and Lizzie had one son, Charles Clinton Lacey. Charles grew up at the Lacey mill complex, possibly working at the mills early on, later joining his father in the carriage repair business. In the 1910 census he is listed as a wagon maker, most likely having taken over his father's carriage and wagon repair business. As automobiles took over the carriage trade, Charles worked as an automobile mechanic, and was listed as a mechanic as late as 1931 in Bridgeport city directories. Before 1910, Charles married Minnie Frances Lewis, a schoolteacher from Monroe, who was the first schoolteacher at Wilson's Mill school. Minnie had been a boarder in the Lacey home while teaching at the local Wilson's Mill school. Minnie was the daughter of Wells Woodruff Lewis, a farmer in Monroe, and Elizabeth Bennett Lewis. Minnie also had early Fairfield colonial roots, as she was the granddaughter of Elias Bennett and Elizabeth Squire, (Elias was the father of Elias Bennett Jr, the "Post Rider of Fairfield"), the great-granddaughter of Nathan Bennett, the "Compo Weaver" and the great-great-great-great-great granddaughter of James Bennett Sr. and Hannah Wheeler (daughter of Black Rock's first settler Thomas Wheeler) who arrived with the Rev. Jones group from Concord in 1644. She may have also descended from the extensive Lewis family of early Fairfield, who were in Fairfield before 1700. By the time of the 1940 census, after the destruction of the Lacey Mills and property upon the building of the Merritt Parkway, Charles and Minnie had moved to Jefferson Street in Fairfield. Charles was involved in the local grange, as well as the local school committees as his father had been, and a Fairfield town representative just like his father and grandfather William S. Wilson. Both he and Minnie remained at Jefferson Street for the remainder of their lives. Charles and Minnie were involved in the Stratfield Baptist Church. (See list of names on signature quilt that is part of this collection). Charles and Minnie had one son, Clinton Lewis Lacey, born in 1907 while they were living on or near the Lacey Mill complex in Plattsville. Clinton Lewis married Meredith Delvina Bilodeau of Massachusetts in 1933. They settled in Fairfield, also on Jefferson Street, and had five children. They were very involved in the Greenfield Hill Grange for decades. Clinton worked for the city of Bridgeport and the state of Connecticut for years in various positions - starting as a chauffeur and truck driver, later foreman and supervisor for the state highway department. The list of early Fairfield family names connected to the Lacey family of Stratfield and Plattsville, are many well known names of early colonial settlers of Fairfield and surrounding areas in Connecticut. Through these marriages of descendants of the first Lacey settlers in Stratfield in the late 17th century, connections can be made to many of the earliest known families who settled Fairfield. Some of the well known family names found in genealogical and historical records are: Alvord, Beardsley, Bennett, Betts, Booth, Brothwell, Bull, Burr, Camp/Campe, Curtis, Foote, Gregory, Grey, Hall, Hubbell, Jackson, Lewis, Lord, Morehouse, Northrup, Odell, Platt, Pratt, Rowland, Sanford, Seeley, Sherman, Sherwood, Silliman, Treadwell, Trowbridge, Wakelee, Wilson, Woodhull and Wheeler, tracing the Lacey family lineage back as early as 1639-1644 when Fairfield and Black Rock Settlers first arrived.

## SCOPE & CONTENT

In 10 full boxes, 2 half-size boxes and 4 oversize items are included mill ledgers and account books, bills, correspondence, deeds, estate and probate papers, military and legal papers, maps, newspaper clippings, promissory notes, school textbooks, practice books, bibles and prayer



books. There are 4 oversize ledgers, and 1 oversize package consisting of 8 individual yearly mill records.

## **ARRANGEMENT**

Most folders are arranged alphabetically, ledgers by date.

## **RELATED PEOPLE/INSTITUTIONS**

Charles C. Lacey (created by)

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## Collection Contents

### **Lacey Family Collection**

#### **Bibles and Miscellaneous Books**

##### **Oversize Items**

Account books and loose Bible pages.

##### **Loose Bible pages c1800, Scrapbook c1890**

##### **Account books**

Michael Lacey, Fulling Mill accounts

##### **Account Book**

John Lacey, misc. accounts, used later by Michael B. Lacey

##### **Account books 1814-1825**

John Lacey, Fulling Mill Yearly Totals of accounts

#### **Lacey Family school papers**

Material related to Fairfield schools, bills, attendance, and administrative records

#### **Lacey Family School-related Papers**

Academic memorabilia, school and workbooks, test pages, and miscellaneous state laws about education.

#### **Textbooks**

Textbooks belonging to Michael B. Lacey, Charles C. Lacey, and other family members.

#### **Lacey Family Materials, 19th century**

##### **Miscellaneous items**

Promissory notes; loose items; notebook

##### **Newspaper clippings**

Newspaper articles on the history of Plattsville.

##### **Maps**

Daniel and Squire Lacey

##### **Legal and military papers**

Daniel and Urban Lacey; includes legal opinion from Roger M. Sherman

##### **Estate and probate papers**

Daniel, Michael, and Elizabeth "Betsey" Wilson Lacey

##### **Deeds**

Daniel, Eugenia, John, Levi, Mary Ann, Squire, and Urban Lacey

**Correspondence 1825-1831**

Henry, Robert, and Urban Lacey

**Bills and bills receipted; town and toll tax**

for Easton and Fairfield

**Bills and bills receipted for Michael Lacey's estate**

1826, 1836

**Bills and bills receipted, 1820-1824**

John Lacey

**Bills and bills receipted, 1813-1819**

John and Michael Lacey

**Bills and bills receipted, 1815-1835**

John, Levi, Michael and Urban Lacey

**Bills and bills receipted, 1814-1857**

John, Levi, Michael and Urban Lacey

**Account Books, 1790-1814**

Sawmill work at Captain Daniel Lacey's sawmill in Weston, and the earliest Lacey fulling mill account books

**Account books, 1813-1814**

John Lacey

**Account books, 1810-1813**

John Lacey

**Account books, 1807-1889**

John Lacey

**Account books, 1805-1812**

John Lacey

**Account books, 1802-1806**

John Lacey

**Small account books, 1804-1855**

John and Urban Lacey

**Account books, 1790-1806**

John and Squire Lacey

**Account books, 1814-1825**

**Loose papers from Oversize Item II account book**

Daniel Lacey, Eugenia Lacey, Michael Lacey and Urban Lacey

**Book and miscellaneous accounts**

John and Michael Lacey

**Account book loose papers**



John and Michael Lacey

**Account book and scrapbook, 1808**

John Lacey

**Account books, 1819-1825**

John Lacey

**Account books, 1815-1819**

John and Michael Lacey shared account books

**Account books 1814-1815**

John and Michael Lacey shared account books

**Account books 1812-1903**

**William S. Wilson accounts, 1846-1903**

Saw mill and store accounts; Wyllys Lyon personal accounts

**Michael Lacey accounts, 1848-1893**

Fulling mill, boot making, toll collection, Fairfield Selectman work, carriage repair business

**Account books 1812-1884**

Michael Lacey, fulling mill

**Lacey and Wilson Family Papers**

Michael B. Lacey, Minnie Lewis Lacey, Charles C. Lacey; Ann Wilson Lacey and other Wilson family members

**Charles C. Lacey - personal correspondence**

**Wilson family correspondence and receipts**

**Ann E. Wilson Lacey - personal correspondence, receipts**

**Minnie Lewis Lacey teaching certificates and letters of employment**

**Minnie Lewis Lacey personal correspondence**

**Michael B. Lacey - broadsides and advertisements**

**Michael B. Lacey legislative correspondence**

**Michael B. Lacey legislative correspondence**

**Charles C. Lacey - social invitations**

**Michael B. Lacey Papers**

**Election ballots and tallies**

**Carriage repair and business correspondence**

**Insurance documents and cemetery deeds**

**Community events and social invitations**

**Bills and bills receipted**

**Miscellaneous papers**

**Personal correspondence**

**Estate inventories of landowners and tenants**

Accounts and debt ledgers recorded by Michael B. Lacey