

## William H. Burr, Jr. Papers

**COLLECTION, MS B115**

**DATE**

1833 – 1937

**CONTRIBUTOR**

Fairfield Museum

**ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY ELEMENT**

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 Burr. WHB/1808 married Mary Ann Jennings (b1809), (daughter of Abraham Gould Jennings) aunt of Annie Burr Jennings and O.G. Jennings. WHB/1854 married Eliza Matilda Huntington (b1855-d1898). Morris Lyon Burr married Catherine Burr (b1896-d1986). Williams 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 Vegetables 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 & CONTENT**

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, 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 WHBIV] 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 (b. 1826-1906), 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 19th 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 Jr. 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 Hezekiah 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."

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## Collection Contents

### William H. Burr, Jr. Papers

#### Series E: William H. Burr Jr. Papers, Miscellaneous

Includes Westport Minuteman Statue

##### Box 8

Box 8 contains 7 folders.

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

**Folder 5: Miscellaneous Papers**

**Folder 4: Letters from Abraham Gould Jennings [Jr.]**

**Folder 3: WHB/1854 Photograph and Miscellaneous Speeches and Writings**

**Folder 2: WHB/1854 Speeches and Writings on Farming**

**Folder 1: WHB/1854 Speeches and Writings on History**

**Folder 7: Early Delicate Papers**

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

Includes papers pertaining to the creation of the park, and materials from a notebook kept by Morris L. Burr of the Sherwood Island Park Association

##### Box 7

Box 7 contains 6 folders.

**Folder 5: Sherwood Island Park Association Minutes and Clippings**

**Folder 4: 1930-1937**

**Folder 3: 1924**

**Folder 2: 1920-1923**

**Folder 1: 1914-1919**

**Folder 6: Newspaper Clippings, Copies**

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

Morris W. Lyon papers (box 6)

##### Box 6

Box 6 contains 5 folders.

**Folder 4: Accounts 1885-1900**

Accounts 1885-1900



**Folder 3: Accounts 1873-1881**

Accounts 1873-1881

**Folder 2: Letters from Bella (Mrs.) Lyon to Burr family**

Letters from Bella (Mrs.) Lyon to Burr family

**Folder 1: Letters pertaining to the Fairfield Library from Oliver G. Jennings**

Letters pertaining to the Fairfield Library

**Folder 5: Notebook (ca 1896)**

Notebook (ca 1896) with draft of Lyon's recollections of growing up in early Fairfield

**Series B: Ledgers/journals, special**

Ledgers/journals, special (box 5)

**Box 5**

Box 5 contains 4 folders.

**Folder 3: Accounts of Eliza Matilda Huntington Burr (Lillie) 1880-1896.**

Accounts of Eliza Matilda Huntington Burr (Lillie) 1880-1896.

**Folder 2: Young WHB/1854 diary and account book 1873-1877**

Young WHB/1854 diary and account book 1873-1877

**Folder 1: Diary of WHB/1808**

Diary of WHB/1808

**Folder 4: Accounts of Mary Hanford Burr 1903-1905**

Accounts of Mary Hanford Burr 1903-1905

**Series A: Farm ledgers, 1862-1930**

Contains boxes 1-4

**Box 4**

Box 4 contains 2 folders.

**Folder 1: Farm and household ledger 1899-1905**

Farm and household ledger 1899-1905

**Folder 2: Burr & Wakeman Pier 50 NY, shipments by farmers**

Burr & Wakeman Pier 50 NY, shipments by farmers

**Box 3**

Box 3 contains 4 folders.

**Folder 3: Farm ledger 1883-1897**

Farm ledger 1883-1897

**Folder 2: Farm ledger 1862-1875**

Farm ledger 1862-1875

**Folder 1: W.H. Burr daily farm diary 1880-1885**

W.H. Burr daily farm diary 1880-1885



**Folder 4: Farm ledger 1897-1905**  
Farm ledger 1897-1905

**Box 2**

Box 2 contains 7 folders.

**Folder 6: Burr & Wakeman railroad shipment receipts 1888**  
Burr & Wakeman railroad shipment receipts 1888

**Folder 5: WHB Jr. farm accounts 1888-1898**  
WHB Jr. farm accounts 1888-1898

**Folder 4: Farm ledger 1886-1898**  
Farm ledger 1886-1898

**Folder 3: Two farm ledgers: 1879-1882; 1882-1887**  
Two farm ledgers: 1879-1882; 1882-1887

**Folder 2: Three farm ledgers 1876-1878**  
Three farm ledgers 1876-1878

**Folder 1: Farm ledger 1879-1885**  
Farm ledger 1879-1885

**Folder 7: Shellfish Commission Annual Reports - 1895, 1898.**  
Shellfish Commission Annual Reports - 1895, 1898.

**Box 1**

Box 1 contains 2 folders.

**Folder 1: Farm and Household ledger 1913-1919**  
Farm and Household ledger 1913-1919

**Folder 2: Farm ledger 1914-1930**  
Folder 2: Farm ledger 1914-1930

**Box 9: Ledgers of William H. Burr and Morris L. Burr**

**Oversize Items**