

Arunah Waterman (1778-1859)
Papers, 1825-1858
MSA 244, Folders 1-4

Introduction

This small collection of photocopied manuscripts was donated by Ann Bolles Johnson, great-great granddaughter of Arunah Waterman, in 1999 (Ms. acc. no. 99.20). She included a family tree, tracing back to Arunah, as well as some bibliographic material. The manuscripts deal partly with the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain canal surveys, partly with Waterman's business and land ventures in Montpelier, and mainly with correspondence with his two sons, and other family members.

Biographical Note

Arunah Waterman, son of Arunah and Hannah (Leffingwell) Waterman, was born November 8, 1778 in Norwich, Connecticut. The family moved to Johnson, Vermont in 1778, the year Arunah Jr. was born. Arunah moved to Montpelier in 1814, where he worked as a lawyer, a grist and woolen mill owner, a farmer, and a surveyor. He served several terms in the Vermont House (1821-1823, 1826) and one in the Senate (1836). He bought a farm and water rights on the north branch of the Winooski River by the falls, and in 1820 he built and co-owned a mill. After the mill burned, in 1826, he spent much of his time farming. He was one of three members of the state commission designated to study the feasibility of building a canal from Lake Champlain at Burlington, up the Winooski River, and down to Wells River on the Connecticut River. He surveyed much of the proposed route.

Arunah Waterman married first Rebecca Noyes in 1804 and second Mehitabel Dodge in 1813. Four children were produced from the first marriage, two sons, Vernon and Loring, surviving, while seven children resulted from the second. Arunah Waterman died January 31, 1859.

Scope and Content

The collection contains some records dealing with the Lake Champlain canal project, including a subscription taken up to cover the survey, some survey costs, a report on the survey, and inquiries made about the survey. There is also a record of a later survey Arunah made for the town of Washington, in Orange County, for roads.

The collection also contains a subscription list organized after the burning of the mill, to help defray the costs. There are many deeds dealing with the transfer of the property, and other land matters, as well as other financial matters.

There are a number of letters between family members, including extensive letters written by sons Vernon and Loring to Arunah mostly dealing with political matters, family matters, and impressions of areas in western New York, as well as those from a nephew asking for financial help at the University of Vermont. There is also a letter from

an old family friend in Norwich, Connecticut, and letters dealing with the settling of the estate of Arunah's son, Charles.

Finally, the collection includes material on a variety of topics, including listers' evaluations of the Waterman property, Arunah's recipes for curing bacon, and the creation of a new cemetery in Montpelier.

Related Collections

VHS MS *X974.3 R252 contains a manuscript journal of Arunah Waterman's canal survey in 1829

Inventory

- MSA 244:1 Survey material relating to the Champlain-Connecticut River Canal. Survey of Town of Washington's roads.
- 2 Deeds to Waterman lands, and various money matters
 - 3 Waterman family correspondence.
 - 4 Miscellaneous papers (1844 directory to Vermont House and Senate Committees, listings of land valuation, cemetery report, the curing of bacon.

Ethan Bisbee
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