
Register of the Burrell Family Papers, 1824-1882

Collection number: Mss132

Holt-Atherton Department of Special Collections
University Library
University of the Pacific

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Burrell Family Papers,

Date (inclusive): 1824-1882

Collection number: Mss132

Creator: Reginald R. Stuart

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Shelf location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the library's online catalog.

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Access

Collection is open for research.

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Biography

The Burrells were a pioneer family of Santa Clara County, California. Lyman J. Burrell was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts(1801). By 1816 his family had moved to Lorain County Ohio and in 1839 he there married Clarissa Wright (1805-1857).

Clarissa had attended Oberlin College. Her brother, Elizur, Jr., a Yale graduate, was professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Western Reserve University, national secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society (1833-40) and an editor of abolitionist journals. He was associated as an editor with William Lloyd Garrison and with John Greenleaf Whittier. Besides his reforming interests (woman suffrage and insurance

laws protecting policy holders) Elizur was a translator of La Fontaine's fables, and, the first Insurance Commissioner of Massachusetts. He is remembered today as the "Father of American Life Insurance." Two of Clarissa Wright Burrell's sisters married ministers and two were wives of Doctors. Her youngest brother, James, became a Presbyterian minister and subsequently migrated to California (1869).

The Burrells had three children, a son, Birney (b. 1840), and two daughters, Martha and Clara. In 1849 Lyman Burrell went overland to California for gold. In the winter of 1850-51 Burrell returned to Ohio with \$2,000 in gold dust. A year later he returned to California to farm near Alviso, renting land from Cary Peebels (1852) and the following year from James Lick. His wife and children joined him there in early 1853. Burrell soon decided, however, that the South Bay climate was harmful to his wife, and, with his land titles hopelessly unresolved, he homesteaded in the Santa Cruz Mountains. These hills, bordering the coastal valleys, lay outside any Spanish land grant and were therefore public domain. Although the Burrell family soon experienced prosperity, they also faced hard work, a frugal life-style and ill health. Clarissa did not improve and died sometime in 1857.

Reginald R. Stuart obtained access to the Burrell family papers and created this collection of transcriptions in the course of publishing some of Clarissa Wright Burrell's letters in the California Historical Society Quarterly, 28:4; 29:1 & 2 (1949-1950). Stuart later republished those items bearing an "*" in the container list as a monograph titled, The Burrell Letters: Including Excerpts from Birney Burrell's Diary and "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian"; A Contribution to Santa Clara County History from the Original Manuscripts (1950). This publication includes a few photographs of the family not found in Ms132. A part of the collection has also appeared in the Summit (Calif.) Literary Society's irregularly published periodical Mountain Echoes or in the Redwood Social Club's Mountain Messenger.

Scope and Content

The Burrell family collection includes family correspondence, diaries, family genealogy notes, reminiscences, farm accounts and Reginald R. Stuart's research notes. The Burrell family letters are a straightforward account of the rigors of the overland and sea journeys to California and the trials of placer mining. They are most unique in their later recital of pioneer ranch life in the California foothills, particularly in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Lyman and Clarissa Burrell's son, Birney, kept a diary for several years. His 1852 diary covers the sea voyage to California, while the 1853 to 1862 diaries depict a life of hard farm work, gathering and hunting food in the mountains and doing odd jobs for neighbors.

BOX 1: BURRELL FAMILY PAPERS

1.1 STAFF RESEARCH NOTES

- 1) Burrell Letters Title Page
- 2) Burrell Letters California Historical Quarterly photocopies

1.2 BURRELL CORRESPONDENCE, 1824-1852 [typed transcriptions; letters are from Clarissa Wright Burrell unless otherwise indicated]

- 1) Introduction, information on Clarissa Wright Burrell [3 pp. on pink paper]
- 2)-Elizur Wright, Tallmadge, Portage Co., Ohio, 4-10-24
- 3)-Miss Martha Wright, Worthington, Ohio, 12-21-28
- 4)-Miss Martha Wright, 12-22-28
- 5)-Mrs. Amelia Hanford, Windham, Portage Co., Ohio, 5-16-34
- 6)-Mrs. Clarissa Wright, Tallmadge, Summit Co., Ohio 5-11-40[3 pp.]
- 7)-To Clarissa Wright, Tallmadge, Rev. Mr. Breck , "My DC" from Elizur Wright, Aurora, 2-2-52.

1.3 BURRELL CORRESPONDENCE, 1850-1856

- 1) The trip from the Valley to the Mountain Home as written by Mr. Burrell. Description of family moving to the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- 2)*-Mrs. Amelia Hanford, Tallmadge, Portage Co., Ohio,2-28-50 [3 pp.]
- 3)*-Mr. Norton, Dear Friends, 1-21-51[pncl. note; 2 pp.]
- 4)*-Lyman J Burrell Dear Husband, Santa Clara Co., Calif., 12-25-51 [pencil note, Mrs. Hirsch]
- 5)*-LJB, Dear Husband, 2-24-52 [3 pp.]
- 6)*-do., 3-3-52 [2 pp.]
- 7)*-do., 3-20-52 [2 pp.]
- 8)*-do., 4-5-52 [2 pp.]
- 9)*-do., 4-25-52 [2 pp.]
- 10)*-do., 6-23-52 [3 pp.]
- 11)*-do., 7-9-52 [2 pp.]
- 12)*-do., 8-18-52 [2 pp.]
- 13)*-LJB from CWB, Boston, 9-19-52
- 14)*-From Elizur Wright, Boston to CWB, 10-16-52
- 15)*-Brother and sisters, 2-12-52 [3 pp; arrival in California]

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- 16)*-Lyman J. Burrell, Santa Clara, Santa Clara, Co., Cal., Dear Brother and Sister Burrell from brother Wm. Hanford, Tallmadge, 12-21-53 [3 pp.]
 - 17)*-Mrs. Amelia Hanford, Tallmadge, Summit Co., Ohio, Dear Brother and Sister, 3-4-54 [4 pp.]
 - 18)*-Rev. William Hanford, Tallmadge Summit Co., Ohio, Dear Brother & sister, 3-19-[54] [3 pp.]
 - 19)*-Rev. William Hanford, Dear Brother and Sister, 9-6-54 [4 pp.]
 - 20)*-Brother and Sister, 2-25-55 [3 pp.]
 - 21)*-do., 12-14-55 [3 pp.]
 - 22)-Misses Martha and Clara, n.d.
 - 23)*-Dear Brother and sister, 6-1-56 [4 pp.]
 - 24)*-Lucy Wright Lewis, 8-17-56 [4 pp.]
 - 25)*-Martha and Clara, n.d.
- 1.4 BIRNEY BURRELL DIARIES, 1852-1862 [typed transcriptions]
- 1) 10-16-52 to 2-6-53 [pp. 1-31]
 - 2) *1-31-53 to 6-9-53 [pp. 1-35]
 - 3) 3-7-54 to 1-8-55 [pp.1-6]
 - 4) 6-1-55 to 1-31-56, [pp.1-39]
 - 5) 1857 [pp. 1-5]
 - 6) 1859 [pp. 1-6]
 - 7) 1860 [pp. 1-3]
 - 8) 1862 [pp. 1-14]
- 1.5 MOUNTAIN MESSENGER PUBLICATIONS [there are two copies of each item in this file]
- 1)-To editor from Yocup Snider, 3-3-62
 - 2)-To Editor from Observer, Summit, 3-3-62
 - 3)-Poetry: "When I Mean to Marry"
 - 4)-Peter Stefle. "Fragment of Romance"
 - 5)-"Mr. Ed from One of the Stork Species"
 - 6)-"Mr. Ed from Josh & Co."; To Editor from Frank, 3-6-62
 - 7)-Advertisement: Haunc Snider; Notice to Batchelors
 - 8)-"Mr. Miner from a farmer's son"
 - 9)-December, Mountain Home "To Uncle Frank" for the Youth's Cabinet, [2 pp.]
 - 10)-"Dear Uncle Frank" for the Youth's Cabinet [2 pp.]
 - 11)-To Aunt Sue, assistant editor, Woodworth Youth's Cabinet; "Dear Aunt Sue" from JBB
 - 12)-To Francis Woodworth editor of Woodworth's Youth Cabinet, Santa Clara Co., Cal., "Dear Uncle Frank," from JBB
 - 13)-"My letters To Daniel Lewis": "Dear Cousin" from Birney, Mountain Home, 9-2-55
 - 14)-"Dear Cousin Daniel" from Birney, Mountain Home, 12-16-55
 - 15)-do., 12-16-55
 - 16)-To Howard Burrell; "Dear Cousin from Birney," 5-29-55 [5 pp.]
 - 17)-Journal account of bear story
 - 18)-Butter account, 1855
 - 19)-Register of hogs, 1854
 - 20)-Register of cattle, 1854; Register of horses
- 1.6 MOUNTAIN ECHOES PUBLICATIONS [reminiscences of Lyman J. Burrell publ. in this 1882 typescript journal]
- 1) Mountain Echoes 1:1-1:4 (12-31-81 to 4-1-82) "Recollections of an Octogenarian," by Lyman J. Burrell. [typescript on tissue paper]
 - 2) Another set on 8" x 14" paper.
 - 2) Photograph of group [subjects identified]
 - 3) Photograph of house
- 1.7 REGINALD STUART NOTES
- 1) Notes on family genealogy and notes on Burrell letters [beige composition book]
 - 2) Stuart description of finding the Burrell letters; notes on Burrell family [beige composition book]
 - 3) Another version of above [typescript]
 - 4) "Introduction" & description of Burrell family and letters [11] by R.R. Stuart? [typescript]