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## Guide to the Allyne - Burr Family Papers

### Collection number: MS 717

California Historical Society

North Baker Research Library  
San Francisco, California

#### Contact Information:

- California Historical Society
- North Baker Research Library
- 678 Mission Street
- San Francisco, California 94105-4014
- Phone: (415) 357-1848, ext. 220
- Fax: (415) 357-1850
- Email: [reference@calhist.org](mailto:reference@calhist.org)
- URL: <http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org/>

Processed by:

California Historical Society staff

Encoded by:

Xiuzhi Zhou

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Allyne - Burr Family Papers

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**Ephraim William Burr**

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Ephraim Willard Burr was born March 7, 1809 in Warren, Rhode Island to Nathan Miller Burr and Lucy Willard Burr. Little is known of his childhood. EWB was a merchant in Rhode Island for some years until late 1849, at which time he left for California. He owned part interest in merchant vessels which carried supplies, for the mines primarily, from the east to the west coast. However, upon arrival, the crew deserted the ships to work in the mines. Burr, therefore, had to go to California to hire new crews in order to get the ships back east again. He travelled from New York by ship, across the Isthmus of Panama by mule, and by steamer to San Francisco. He arrived in San Francisco April 21, 1850. According to one story, Burr brought the crews with him and put them on board the vessels, which were waiting outside the San Francisco Bay, so that they were never able to set foot in California and have a chance to desert to work in the mines--a tremendous problem at that time. Then, realizing the lucrative merchandising business possible by supplying mining, Burr decided to remain in San Francisco.

EWB opened a general store in San Francisco with two partners, Mr. Marston and Mr. Mattoon, and carried groceries, ships' supplies, and "other generally needed articles". The store was profitable so when EWB felt sufficiently established in San Francisco, he sent for his family. He hired a man to see them safely to San Francisco, where they arrived in March 1852. EWB also shipped materials to build a house from the east coast around the Horn. Their house was actually pre-fabricated--all parts were pre-cut and put in sections before it was sent. After an extensive search for a site, the Burr family chose to locate their house at Filbert and Van Ness. Apparently, before the Burr home was built, Burr bought a ship, named the Charleston, for \$700.00. He and his family lived in it until their home was built. The ship was docked off Clark's Point which was the Broadway Wharf. They lived on board the Charleston for nine months until their house was completed in November 1852. This house was destroyed in 1906 by the fires by the earthquake and a new house was built on the old foundation.

In 1854, EWB helped organize the San Francisco Accumulating Fund Association (known as the old Clay Street Bank). This was the first savings bank on the Pacific Coast. In September 1856, he was nominated by the People's Reform Party for mayor of San Francisco, then called President of the Board of Supervisors. He was elected as the ninth mayor on November 4, 1856. EWB was re-elected twice, an accomplishment unachieved before that time. During his first term he reduced the city's yearly budget from \$1,500,000 to \$300,000. He retired from politics in 1859.

On July 23, 1857, EWB was elected president of the newly incorporated Savings and Loan Society (San Francisco Accumulating Fund Association) and was its president for 21 years. EWB became president of the San Francisco Fire Insurance Company in 1861, which dissolved five years later. He pushed for the development of the cable car and gave a loan of \$30,000 for that purpose.

In 1879 EWB retired from an active business life. The Burr family was forced to move, in 1891, when the Board extended Van Ness Avenue to the bay, through his property. EWB died on July 20, 1894 and left an estate of \$6 million.

### **John Winslow Allyne**

John Winslow Allyne was born April 18, 1841 in Brewster Massachusetts to Samuel Hinkley Allyne and Sophronia Winslow. Ten days after his birth, his mother died.

In 1859, at age 18, JWA, with his father, came around the Horn to California on the ship Memmon. They were later joined by other members of his family.

For some time, JWA was a clerk in the Stanford Brothers store. His sister, Helen, had married Josiah Stanford in 1861. Then in 1870-, JWA became the successor of that store with William H. White. These partners, Allyne and White, had the first finery store in North Beach, and also made the first successful experiments with black oil in its use on railroad car axles. This invention was put to use on the old Central Pacific Railroad and began their fortunes in business in San Francisco. Much of the proceeds from the oil business was invested in real estate in San Francisco and New York.

JWA married Mary Newell Burr on September 20, 1871 in the Unitarian Church of San Francisco. She was the daughter of Ephraim Willard Burr and Abbie Miller Child and was born at Warren Rhode, Island on May 11, 1844.

JWA died at his home on Gough and Green Streets, San Francisco, on December 4, 1901. Mary died in San Francisco on September 13, 1921.

### **Scope and Content**

This collection consists of materials from the Ephraim Willard Burr and John Winslow Allyne families. The two families are interconnected through the marriage of John Winslow Allyne to E.W. Burr's daughter, Mary Newell. The personal material belongs mainly to the Allyne family, although there are also a few interesting early letters from the Burr family. The business files of E.W. Burr contain real estate deeds and papers, business letters, and papers from several of Burr's businesses. Most of Allyne's business material relates to his oil and lamp business. The last two boxes contain the many genealogy charts and notes collected by the Allynes, and the personal and wartime memorabilia the Allynes wanted to keep.

Both Ephraim Willard Burr and John Winslow Allyne came to San Francisco from New England in the 1850's. E.W. Burr eventually became President of the Clay Street Savings & Loan Society, and the mayor of San Francisco. He owned extensive real estate, and the Burr-Mattoon Company. John Winslow Allyne owned the Allyne & White Oil and Lamp Company with William White of New York.

**Correspondence**

- Box Box 1, Folder 1 **Burr family personal correspondence 1850-1906**
- Folder 2 **Allyne family personal correspondence 1835-1940**
- Folder 3 **Samual Hinkley Allyne, Sr. correspondence 1841-1883**
- Folder 4 **Samual Hinkley Allyne, Jr. correspondence 1847-1901**
- Folder 5 **John Winslow Allyne, Jr. correspondence 1852-1901**

**Family property**

Box Box 1, Folder 6 **Burr family cemetery records 1869-1974**  
Folder 7 **Allyne family Massachusetts property deeds 1810-1846**  
Folder 8 **Burr family property deeds/mortgages on Pacific and Powell 1844-1854**  
Folder 9 **Burr family San Francisco property deeds 1850-1902**  
Folder 10 **Burr family property tax material 1859-1893**  
Box Box 2, Folder 11 **Burr family property improvement 1851-1895**  
Folder 12 **Burr-Allyne property book 1901-1905**

**Businesses**

Box Box 2, Folder 13 **Burr-Mattoon business correspondence 1864-1897**  
Folder 14 **Burr-Mattoon business papers 1850-1861**  
Folder 15 **Ship "Henry Tukes" papers and lawsuit correspondence 1850-1853**  
Folder 16 **Ship "Henry Tukes" lawsuit material 1850**  
Folder 17 **Ship "Henry Tukes" accounts and receipts 1849-1851**  
Folder 18 **Burr business account books 1887-1889**  
Folder 19 **E.C. Burr letter copy book 1920-1926**  
Folder 20 **Burr family account books 1855-1920**  
Box Box 3 , **Burr family miscellaneous business material 1850-1876**  
Folder 21  
Folder 22 **Allyne-White business correspondence 1880-1907**  
Folder 23 **Allyne-White Pacific Oil Works accounts and receipts 1869-1901**  
Folder 24 **Leland Stanford Junior Kindergarten Trust 1899**

**Genealogy**

Box Box 3, Folder 25 **genealogy related correspondence 1869-1917**  
Folder 26 **Burr and Bernard family histories and genealogy 1809 -1927**  
Folder 27 **Burr and Child family genealogy 1673-1911**  
Folder 28 **Burr and related family genealogy 1716-1968**  
Folder 29 **Allyne and related family-ancient ancestors**  
Box Box 4, Folder 30 **Allyne and related family-ancient ancestors 1618-1940**  
Folder 31 **Allyne family genealogy-Society of Mayflower Descendants material 1920-1541**  
Folder 32 **Allyne family genealogy ancestors-research papers**  
Folder 33 **Allyne and Burr heraldry**

**Ephemera**

Box Box 4, Folder 34 **Allyne and Burr miscellaneous ephemeral material 1848-1928**  
Folder 35 **Miscellaneous ephemeral material 1880-1957**  
Folder 36 **Allyne European trip bills 1904**  
Folder 37 **Allyne and Burr miscellaneous bills 1871-1911**  
Folder 38 **World War I Red Cross material 1917-1919**  
Folder 39 **World War I Red Cross newspaper articles 1919**  
Folder 40 **Earthquake newspapers 1906**  
Folder 41 **Miscellaneous newspapers articles 1872-1939**  
Folder 42 **Miscellaneous newspapers articles 1844-1931**

**Photographs**

**Additional Note**

The Allyne-Burr family papers include 432 photographs, the majority of which are of family members. In addition to group photographs, there are single portraits of many members of both families including several of Ephraim Willard Burr and John Winslow Allyne. There are also many images of the Allyne Residence on Gough and Green Streets, the Burr Residence on Vallejo Street, and the E.W. Burr House on Filbert and Van Ness. Other photographs include building ruins from the earthquake and fire of 1906, San Francisco views, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and a few from Warren, Rhode Island and Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographic processes in this collection are mainly black and white paper prints and albumen prints, but there is also five tintypes. Photographs from notable photographers include three from Watkins and many from Taber.