

Creator: Gibeon Elden Bradbury

Repository: Dyer Library Archives & Special Collections

Inclusive Dates: 1814-1952

Bulk Dates: Correspondences are 75% of the collection, 1880-1952

Extent: 5 cubic feet / 4 linear feet

Collection No.: MMS 51 (Saco Museum Archives)

Restrictions: None. This collection is open for research

Biographical Notes: Gibeon Elden Bradbury (GEB) was born in 1833 in Salmon Falls, a section of Buxton, Maine, and lived there for most of his life. He was the son of Nathaniel Scamman Bradbury and Lucy Sawyer Bradbury. His father was a tailor; the family moved to Saco in 1845 or 1846 so that Nathaniel Bradbury could work for his friend Daniel Merrill Owen, who had a successful tailoring business in Saco. Nathaniel Bradbury died in 1848, leaving Gibeon to care for his mother for a few years until her second marriage to Mr. Foss. In 1851, Mr. Owen got a place for Gibeon in the shop of a carriage painter, J.P. Miller. Here he ornamented vehicles including carriages, grocery carts, wagons, sleighs, and beef wagons.

In 1860, Gibeon married Jane Bixby Akers (JBB) of Hollis, Maine, sister of the sculptors Paul and Charles Akers. She was called “Jennie B.” by her family and Jeannie” by Gibeon.

In 1860, Gibeon Bradbury, Sr. established his own business in Portland, ornamenting wagons and sleighs and painting banners, flags, and signs. After a few years, not earning much money in the city, he and Jennie returned to Salmon Falls. He continued to ornament wagons in Saco and Biddeford, working in these cities during the week and returning to Salmon Falls on weekends. Bradbury made his living as an ornamental painter during the 1850’s and 1860’s and continued to supplement his income in this way throughout his life. However, he struggled to be considered an artist rather than a craftsman and spent hours sketching from nature and painting landscapes. As he developed a group of customers, he also painted floral and fruit still life and portraits. Bradbury used a variety of methods to sell his work. By the 1860’s he had established local clients who purchased landscapes, pictures of house, still lifes and-portraits. e also painted pictures as wedding gifts. He exhibited his work at art expositions at local and county fairs and attempted to sell his paintings through dealers in Biddeford, Saco and Portland. Making a living was a challenge throughout his life.

Gibeon Bradbury had a large group of friends and correspondents. He was a gifted musician who accompanied singers on his violin. He also made furniture, frames and violins and designed rugs and quilt blocks. In the 1870’s and 1880’s he taught painting to local students. His paintings are in various public and private collections in the Saco area, and his seven volumes of diaries are in the Maine Historical Society in Portland

In 1878, the Bradbury’s only child, Gibeon Elden Bradbury, Jr. (GEB, Jr.) was born. His father called in “Lad.” Jennie died in February 1896 and Gibeon Sr. died in 1904. Gibeon, Jr. became a teacher and married Maud Bradbury (MB) in 1905. Gibeon and Maud had three children, two sons and a daughter. Their son, Herbert, died in 1916.

Provenance. There are some museum accession records and Deed of Gifts for a portion of this collection. Tia Bradbury and Catherine Tonis have donated individual items that were added to this collection. This manuscript this collection was transferred from the York Institute (now Saco Museum) to the Library’s Archives as a repository site. The Saco Museum still houses Bradbury’s

paintings and other artifacts. Provenance is incomplete and more research needs to be done.

Scope and Content Notes: The Gibeon Bradbury Family papers are composed primarily of correspondences to Gibeon Elden Bradbury (GEB), his wife, Jennie (JBB), and his son, Gibeon Elden Bradbury, Jr. (GEB, Jr.). The correspondences are arranged chronologically, with folders of letters at the beginning for which only the month is known or for which there are not dates known. These letters primarily addressed to GEB and JBB. There follows a small group of letters and documents dated from 1800 through the early 1850's addressed to various Bradbury's, including Nathaniel; a few are addressed to GEB. Next comes a large segment of the Collection, dated 1855 through 1904, consisting of letters addressed to GEB and JBB from friends and relatives. Many letters are from Jennie's brother, Charles Akers, living in New York City. Most are personal correspondence and touch on the activities, health and travels of the correspondents and of the Bradburys'. Some also talk about Bradbury's work and his efforts to sell his paintings. Condolence letters on the deaths of JBB in 1896 and GEB in 1904 are also found in the collection. After 1905 the letters are primarily addressed to Gibeon Elden Bradbury, Jr. (GEB, Jr.) and his wife Maud (M BB). Many letters from 1906 are to GEB, Jr. from MB while he was living in Westerly, Rhode Island and she was ill at home in Maine. Numerous letters from 1916 are sympathy notes to MB on the loss of her infant son Herbert. The last letter to MB are dated 1926. The last correspondence in the collection is dated 1952. Unfortunately, the Maine History Volunteer who indexed the letters removed all the envelopes and kept them together—separate from the letter. Other materials includes a large collection of photographs, miscellaneous journals, old deeds and miscellaneous supporting documents.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series 1. Correspondences. This series was actually processed by a volunteer from the Maine History Room. 70% of the correspondences were index. This index identifies each letter in the collection. For each piece, an index of the person to whom the letter is addressed, the person who wrote the letter, the date of the letter, and a brief synopsis of its contents are noted on individual index cards. The other 30% of the correspondences around broken down into groups: GEB Sr., Jennie Bradbury, and Bradbury family letters.

Series 2. Personal Journals and Ledgers. This series comprises of journals. Some are identified by Gibeon Bradbury's name. Others are journals used as scrapbooks for recipes. While others are payment books. Although some of the journals are clearly Gibeon Sr., there are some which may have belonged to Gibeon, Jr., One particular Personal Journal belonged to Gibeon Sr., but has references to Gibeon Jr. making the date range for this journal 1846 through the early 1900s.

Series 3. Genealogy. Documents showing early family tree. Bradbury—Scammon names.

Series 4. Deeds, Contracts, Legal Documents. This series comprises of 19th century land deeds, contract, receipts. Special note: birth certificate of Phoebe Bradbury, GEB Jr.'s daughter. We also have a large number of legal documents pertaining to the Akers (Acres) family.

Series 5. Photographs. A large group of photographs including cabinet cards, Cartes de visits, Albumen prints, gelatin silver prints. Only a few are identified.

Series 6. Miscellaneous supporting documents and ephemera. Calling cards, news clippings and magazine articles, poetry, recipes and miscellaneous ephemera.

Series 7. Artifact. Hair from both Gibeon Elden Bradbury and Jeannie B. Akers and dried flowers.

ORGANIZATION OF SERIES

Collection Title: Gibeon E. Bradbury Family Papers

Series 1. Correspondences [1800-1952]

Series 2. Personal Journals & Ledgers [1860-1940]

a. Diary's

b. Composition Books and School Journals

c. Ledgers

d. Miscellaneous

Series 3. Genealogy [1761-1841]

Series 4. Deeds, Contracts, Legal Documents. [n.d., 1814-1871]

Series 5. Photographs. [1865-1916]

Series 6. Miscellaneous supporting documents [n.d., 1864-1935]

Series 7. Artifacts [1856]

FINDING AIDS

Collection Title: Gibeon E. Bradbury Family Papers

Series 1. Correspondences

Box # Folder #

1	1	<i>Correspondences to GEB & JB, n.d.</i>
	2	<i>Correspondences to GEB & JB, no year</i>
	3-35	<i>Correspondences 1800-1865</i>
2	36-58	<i>Correspondences 1870-1892</i>
3	59-71	<i>Correspondences 1893-1903</i>
4	72-84	<i>Correspondences 1904-1914</i>
5	85-89	<i>Correspondences 1816-1952</i>
	90	<i>Envelopes 1986-1906, n.d.</i>
6		<i>Index to correspondences, item level, chronologically listed</i>
6A		<i>Correspondences, GEB Sr. 1861-1893</i>
6B	90A	<i>Correspondences, GEB Sr. 1866-1893</i>
	90B	<i>Correspondences, Jennie Bradbury, 1866-1894</i>
	90C	<i>Correspondences, Various friends and relatives of Bradbury's, 1822-1896</i>
	90D	<i>Correspondence between Charles Bradbury from father GEB, Jr., 1905</i>

Series 2. Journals

7		a. Diaries
	91	<i>Personal Journal, Gibeon E. Bradbury, 1846-1849, early 1900s</i>
	92	<i>Gibeon E. Bradbury Personal Journal, 1860</i>
	93	<i>Jennie Akers Diary "Jeannie B's Diary with drawings" 1868 [note: includes a single sheet from a 1872 diary]</i>
	94	<i>Maud Bradbury's ? Five year diary, 1936-1940 [some loose sheets tucked into pages, possibly written by GEB, Sr., 1887]</i>
	95	<i>Personal Journal, Gibeon E. Bradbury, Jr. 1898-1906</i>
		b. School Composition and study notes
	96	<i>1. School commencement, 1852, study notes (owner, unknown) 2. School composition book, [?1900] (owner, unknown) 3. School composition/study notes, Maud M. Woodworth, 4. History of Education (document), 1906 [GEB Jr.?)</i>
8	97	c. Business/ work Ledgers
		<i>1. Blot Book No. 7, 1824. Ledger/Cash book 2. "Joseph Hutchins Jr., his day book and ledger" for received and paid goods. 1832-n.d. Gibeon Sr., used this book for doo- dling and note taking.</i>

Box # Folder #

8 97

3. *GEB, Sr., Job ledger for work done., 1847-1849*
4. *GEB, Sr., Purchasing ledger for items bought., 1849*
5. *GEB, Sr., Job ledger for work done, 1860*

98

d. Miscellaneous

Recipe clippings (Jennie reused a ledger as a scrapbook for recipes)

Series 3. Genealogy

99

1. *Names of children of Benjamin and Mary Scammon 1786-1809*
2. *Family records of James Bradbury and Mary Scammon*
3. *Family records of James Bradbury and Eunice Stone Bradbury*
4. *Family name James Bradbury and Mary Scammon*

Series 4. Deeds, Contracts, Legal Documents

9 100

1. *Draft of John White Lott at [Suttontown]???, [n.d.]*
2. *Receipt for \$7.50 paid by Mrs. Price to settle promise with H. Edward to settle account with James M[--]ford and Winfield Price, [n.d.]*
3. *Receipt for item and labor, 1815*
4. *Receipt, Biddeford, June 5, 1817*
5. *Payment to John Smith \$116, January 6, 1818*
6. *Action again Ebenezer [Seaver?] to unpaid debts Joseph [Sayward], 1820*
7. *Deed of Sale from Jacob Corliez and Rachie his wife to William Scott, March 14, 1822 (rec'd. April 15, 1837)*
8. *Cash ledger list, John Smith, 182[8]*
9. *Receipt of Sale to Nathaniel Bradbury for 2 colts, Sept. 13, 1833*
10. *Land deed to Nathaniel Bradbury, February 13, 1836*
11. *Land deed to Nathaniel Bradbury, March 17, 1836*
12. *Received payment for work done from Corlies Price to Wm. [Remlen], June 25, 1836*
13. *Curlice Price to Henry Slocum, payment for labor, 1837-1839*
14. *Corlies Price to Coolies [Wolcott], payment of labor, 1839-41*
15. *Bill of Sale, August 16, 1838, Charles Hamilton*
16. *Proof of U.S. Citizenship to, [Miles] Price, Dec. 19, 184?*
17. *Offer to purchase property, Spring's Bridge, Feb. 3, 1847*
18. *Court Order, Oct. 6, 1855*
19. *Receipt for Joseph L. Bean, Biddeford, 1859*
20. *Enrolled Militia of Maine, Gibeon E. Bradbury, 1862*
21. *Receipt for quota/allowance for military service, John Price, Aug. 2nd, 1864*
22. *Receipt for land purchased at Sea Bright by John Price, Sept. 7, 1871*

Series 4. Deeds, Contracts, Legal Documents (cont'd.)

Box # Folder #

- 9 100** 23. Birth certificate, Phoebe Bradbury, daughter of GEB Jr., 1907
24. Will of Walter Bradbury
25. James Davis to Nathan Bradbury, Receipt, 1838
100A Miscellaneous legal documents, 1814-1854
- 9A --** Legal documents belonging to Akers (Acres) family, 1831-1877

10 Series 5. Photographs (see attached finding aid for photographs)

Series 6. Miscellaneous supporting documents [n.d., 1897-1935]

Box # Folder #

- 9 101** Poetry (original) [n.d.]
"Barbara" - Old German
"Lorelie. Heine."
"The Sands O' Dec."
"The Face Upon the Floor"
Clippings from newspapers
- 102** Short stories & essays (original) [n.d.]
"The Raggedy Man"
"The Happy Little Cripple"
"The Storm of Secession"
- 103** News clippings
Poem "Der Baby" [n.d.]
"Mrs. G. E. Bradbury to Appear in play given by Dorcas Society,"
Portland Press Herald, August 6, 1935
"State of Maine : A proclamation for a day of Public Thanksgiving
and Praise," [n.d.]
"Bradbury-Woodworth" wedding announcement [1905]
Obituary for Jane C. Akers
News item regarding garden party given by M/M G. Bradbury
Misc. news clippings 1854, 1884-1886, n.d.
- 104** Magazine articles from
"The Christian Work: A Religious Weekly Review" pages 139-141
"The Christian Century," pages 17-20
"The Christian Century Pulpit," pages 7-10
"The Watchman Examiner," pages 809-810, June 30, 1932
• Various religious articles, 1900 & 1907
• Literary Digest 1855
- 105** Other Miscellaneous items 1864-1917

Series 7. Artifacts [1860 or '80]

Box # Folder #

106

*Piece of hair from the heads of Gibeon E. Bradbury and Jennie Akers
Dried Cardinal Flowers*