

Guide to the Lamson Family Papers PVMA Library

Scope and Content Note:

The papers in this collection primarily relate to the family of Silas Lamson (1778-1855), who patented a type of scythe snath which he produced in Cummington, Mass. He went on to found the Lamson & Goodnow cutlery company in Shelburne Falls, Mass. Many of the papers in the collection were a gift of William L. Warren, grandson of Alan G. Lamson, in 1984. See also papers of Lamson & Goodnow Company.

Silas Lamson, son of Nicholas (1748-1822) and Mindwell Brigham Lamson (d. 1785), was born in Boylston, Mass., in 1778. Lamson married Susan Goodnow in 1804; the couple lived in Sterling, Mass., where they had 10 children, two of whom are listed below. Sometime after 1825 they relocated to Cummington, living there until c. 1837 when they moved to Shelburne Falls, Mass. He became known as an eccentric for his religious beliefs and personal appearance. Lamson died in Shelburne Falls in 1855.

His papers include biographical information, a patent application, public "notices" expressing his opinion on issues, correspondence

Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson, son of Silas and Susan Lamson, was born in Sterling Mass., in 1814. He married Poly Eager of Sterling in Sept. 1836. The couple had five children, three of whom are mentioned below. Ebenezer worked with his father in manufacturing, and eventually became President of Lamson & Goodnow Manufacturing Co. During the Civil War he became involved in producing muskets for the federal government in Windsor, Vt., and invented a lock that was used at the Springfield (Mass.) Armory. Ebenezer served as one of the original officers of the Baptist Vineyard Association, and he died at their camp in Cottage City, Mass., in Jan. 1891.

His papers consist of biographical materials, correspondence regarding a patent case involving his lock, invoices and receipts, and correspondence and printed items relating to the Baptist Vineyard Association.

Ward Nichols Lamson, son of Silas and Susan Lamson, was born in Sterling in Sept. 1820. He moved to Burlington, Iowa, in 1837, where he married Elizabeth Dills in 1844. He went on to have 3 additional marriages and ten children in all. Lamson founded the Fairfield Free Public Library and died in that town in April 1904.

His papers include correspondence, a biographical sketch, a printed paper he read to the Farmers' Club of Jefferson County, and a newspaper notice and obituary.

Poly Eager Lamson, daughter of Uriah and Nancy Fairbans Eager, was born in Sterling in Jan. 1827 where she married Ebenezer Lamson. She died in Brookline, Mass., in Oct. 1892.

Her papers include correspondence, a copy of her mother's will, a warrant deed to land in Kansas, and various invoices.

Flora Mandana Lamson, daughter of Ebenezer and Poly Eager Lamson, was born in Sterling in Jan. 1840. She died unmarried in Newton, Mass., in Feb. 1916, and was buried in Shelburne Falls.

Among her few papers are personal and business correspondence. One of the former references her illness and removal to Newton to be near her sister, Florence, and her husband.

Florence Nancy Lamson, daughter of Ebenezer and Poly Eager Lamson, was born in Sterling in 1850. She married the Rev. Orrin P. Gifford in Shelburne Falls in June 1877. The couple moved to Buffalo, NY, where he was a pastor of the Baptist Church.

Her papers consist of correspondence and a release of demands on the estate of her mother.

Alan Gray Lamson, son of Ebenezer and Poly Eager Lamson, was born in Shelburne Falls in March 1859. He lived many years in Brooklyn, NY, where he married Martha Johnson of Troy, NY, in June 1880. After her death he married Frances Burgess in Nov. 1897. Lamson was an inventor and entrepreneur with interests in the areas of transportation, electrical power, and construction materials. He died in Providence, RI, in Dec. 1932, and is buried in Shelburne Falls.

His papers include numerous letters and documents relating to his inventions and their funding, correspondence and documents on copper mining in Utah, correspondence and photos regarding his "harmonic impeller" (i.e., propeller), and correspondence with and to his daughter, Charlotte Warren, the latter regarding his illness and death.

Roswell Hawks Lamson, son of Jeremiah (a son of Silas) and Helen M. Hawks Lamson, was born in Burlington, Iowa, in March 1838. His family traveled to Oregon around 1848 where they settled in Willamette County. Lamson attended the Naval Academy in Annapolis in 1858, and served in the Navy during the Civil War. He returned to Portland, OR, in 1866 and married Catherine Buckingham there in Nov. 1867. Lamson died in Portland in 1903 after serving many years as Clerk of the US Court.

His papers include two invitations, a photographic reproduction of an 1863 sketch of "Fort Lamson" on the Nansemond River, VA, a manuscript biographical sketch, and a copy of his obituary.

William Lamson Warren, son of Charles and Charlotte Lamson Warren, was born in Boston in 1912. He received an advanced degree from Yale, and had a long career as an art and architectural historian, working at the Connecticut Hist. Soc., and chief curator at Old Sturbridge Village. He died in March 1998.

His papers consist of miscellaneous personal correspondence covering the period 1939 - 1984.

Container List:

Box 1:

- Folder 1: Silas Lamson – Biographical (3 items - incl. a set of typed notes on cards)
- Folder 3: Silas Lamson – Correspondence with Abby Folsom (7 items)
- Folder 4: Silas Lamson – Correspondence with sons (20 items)
- Folder 5: Silas Lamson – "Notices" (3 items)
- Folder 6: Silas Lamson – Correspondence – from Ward Lamson & Abby Folsom (2 items)
- Folder 7: Silas Lamson – Correspondence – Re: Silas Lamson (2 items)
- Folder 8: Ward Lamson – Misc. correspondence (3 items)
- Folder 9: Ward Lamson – Biography & miscellany (7 items)
- Folder 10: Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson – Biography & miscellany (5 items)
- Folder 11: Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson – Patent case (44 items)
- Folder 12: Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson – Bills, receipts & legal papers (6 items)
- Folder 13: Ebenezer Goodnow Lamson – Baptist Vineyard Assoc. (6 items)

Box 2:

- Folder 1: Polly E. Lamson – Miscellany (9 items)
- Folder 2: Florence Lamson Gifford – Miscellany (6 items)
- Folder 3: Flora Lamson – Miscellany, 1892-1915 (12 items)
- Folder 4: Roswell Hawks Lamson (5 items)
- Folder 5: Allan G. Lamson – Correspondence, etc. Re: Harmonic Impeller (15 items)
- Folder 6: Allan G. Lamson – Correspondence, etc. Re: various inventions (23 items)
- Folder 7: Allan G. Lamson – Correspondence, etc. Re: copper mining (4 items)
- Folder 8: Allan G. Lamson – Correspondence Re: Allan Lamson & to daughter Charlotte Warren (25 items)
- Folder 9: William L. Warren – Misc. correspondence (22 items)
- Folder 10 : Lamson Family – Genealogy & family history (14 items)