

## GUIDE TO THE NIMS FAMILY PAPERS PVMA LIBRARY

The material described in this guide has been received by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association from a variety of sources at various times.

### Scope and Content Note

The collection is contained in six boxes. The Contents of the first box consists of personal papers of members of the Nims family. Much of the biographical information below and the numbers appearing with the names of some of the persons were taken from the genealogical notes on the Nims family in the second volume of *The History of Deerfield* by George Sheldon (1895). The other boxes contain records of the Nims Family Association; Correspondence of George and Jessie Arms Sheldon, Norman Nims, and others relating to the Nims family; and miscellaneous material, including photographs and printed material.

### Biographical Notes and Description of Series

**Godfrey Nims**<sup>1</sup>, Cordwainer, was a "lad" in Northampton, Mass., in 1667. He purchased land in Deerfield in 1674 and was one of the first settlers there. He served in the Falls Fight (Turners Falls, Mass.) in 1676. He married Mary (Miller) Williams, widow of Zebediah Williams, in 1677 and they had six children, two of whom are named below. In 1692, four years after Mary's death, he married Mehitable (Smead) Hull, widow of Zebadiah Hull. This couple had five children, one of whom died in infancy, three in fires that destroyed the first two Nims houses, and the fifth, captured and taken to Canada, remained there. Godfrey died in the raid of 1704, soon after the second fire. His widow, captured in the 1704 raid, was killed on the way to Canada.

His papers include a photocopy of an indenture setting forth his purchase of land in Deerfield from John and Rebecca Weller in 1694; a recent copy detailing other land in Deerfield which he purchased in 1679, 1692, and 1694; a contemporary manuscript inventory of his estate, March 12, 1705; and a contemporary manuscript account of the settlement of his estate by Benjamin Munn, his son-in-law and administrator, January 11, 1708/9.

**John Nims**<sup>2</sup>, son of Godfrey and Mary (Miller) Nims, was born in 1679. By report of Stephen Williams, he was captured by Indians in 1703 and taken to Canada, but he escaped and returned to Deerfield in 1705. He lived on the family homestead. In 1707, he married Elizabeth Hull and the couple had twelve children. Many of their descendants are named below. John died in 1762, his wife in 1754.

His papers consist of an agreement with his brother Ebenezer in 1720 in regard to the division of land formerly owned by their father; a deed to land in Deerfield which he purchased the same year from Ebenezer and Elizabeth Field; a quitclaim from Aaron Deniour [Denio] of Deerfield to his share of unappropriated land granted by the General Court, 1738; and a quitclaim from his brother Ebenezer to sundry tracts of land in Deerfield, 1746.

**John Nims**<sup>4</sup>, son of John<sup>2</sup> and Elizabeth (Hull) Nims, was born in 1715. In 1735 he married Abigail Smead, who died in 1755. He married a second time, in 1761, Abigail (Hoyt) Clesson, widow of Mathew Clesson. There were nine children of the first marriage, none of the second. John died in 1769, his widow in 1790.

His papers consist of two plats of land in the Second Division, one surveyed for Nims by Elijah Williams in 1736, another surveyed by John Catlin in the same year; a deed to land in the Northwest Division of Deerfield purchased from Thomas, Jeremiah, and Daniel Nims in 1765; and a certified copy of his will, dated September 27, 1769.

**Reuben Nims**<sup>12</sup>, son of John<sup>4</sup> and Abigail (Smead) Nims, was born in 1740. In 1762, he married Sarah Burt, and after her death in 1774, married Deliverance Gould. There were six children from the first marriage, four from the second. Reuben moved to Shelburne, Mass., about 1767 and is identified in deeds as an innkeeper there. He died in 1814, his wife Deliverance the previous year.

All but two of the seven Reuben Nims papers are deeds or quitclaims to land in Shelburne which he acquired or sold. One document is the arbitration decree of Ebenezer Childs, Moses Hawks, and John Long of Shelburne in regard to the controversy between Reuben Nims and Sarah Nims (widow of Reuben's brother, Abner) in 1783. A certified manuscript copy of Reuben's will (1813, with letters testamentary the following year) is also included.

**William Nims**, son of Jonathan<sup>23</sup> and Hannah (Densmore) Nims, and grandson of Reuben Nims, was born in Heath, Mass., in 1798. He married Phila Gunn of Montague, Mass..

He is represented by a certified copy of his will with letters testamentary (1836).

**Samuel Nims**<sup>24</sup> son of Reuben<sup>12</sup> and Deliverance (Gould) Nims was born in Shelburne, Mass., in 1780. In 1805 he married Electa Skinner of that town and the couple had seven children. Samuel and his wife later moved to Lawrence County, New York.

There are two deeds to land in Shelburne, one tract he and his father-in-law Aaron Skinner purchased from Samuel's father Reuben, 1811; the other a tract he received as a gift from his father, 1813.

**Joel Nims**<sup>25</sup> son of Reuben<sup>12</sup> and Deliverance (Gould) Nims, was born in 1782. He first married Betsy, daughter of Asa Nims, and the year after her death in 1812 he married Lovinia Bardwell. The family settled in Shelburne, Mass. Three children were born of the first marriage, seven of the second. Joel died in 1861, his widow in 1871.

His papers relate to land holdings. the earliest is a deed to land in Shelburne which he purchased from Sarah Kemp, 1817; a deed to land in Shelburne which he sold to Benjamin Nash, 1818; a deed to land in the northwest part of Deerfield which he bought from John and Andrew Andrews, 1825; a mortgage deed on his home lot in Shelburne, 1827; and a quitclaim from Abner and Elizabeth Nims of Sandusky, Ohio, to land in Greenfield, Mass., 1837.

**Ebenezer Nims**, son of John<sup>4</sup> and Abigail (Smead) Nims, was born in 1751. He served during the Revolutionary War under Captain Agrippa Wells and Lieutenant William Taylor. In 1774, he married Margaret Patterson. The family moved first to Bernardston, Mass., in 1779, and later to Rowe, Mass.

He is represented by a judgment against Samuel Fisk of Upton in Worcester County (1767) and by a survey of a tract of land that belonged to him in 1773.

**Samuel P. Nims**, son of Ebenezer and Margaret (Patterson) Nims, was born in Rowe, Mass., in 1778. In Rowe's military records he was named among the rank and file in a company ready to serve, but apparently not called for service in the War of 1812.

There are two of his papers, both judgments brought against him in 1804, and both endorsed as defaulted.

**Hull P. Nims**<sup>15</sup>, son of Thomas<sup>5</sup> and Esther (Martindale) Nims, was born in Greenfield, Mass., in 1755, where he settled. He served in the Revolutionary War and was present at the capture of Burgoyne. In 1785, he married Hannah Newton, also of Greenfield, and the couple had ten children, one of whom is named below. Hull died in 1842, his widow in 1847.

He is represented by seven papers, all concerned with land in Deerfield which was mortgaged by Richard Catlin in 1803, and finally released from mortgage by the Boston Bank to Hull Nims and Aaron Field Wells.

**William Newton Nims**, son of Albert H.<sup>28</sup> and Nancy (Wells) Nims, and grandson of Hull Nims<sup>15</sup>, was born in 1827. He was married first to Hannah P. Buddington, and after her death, to Eunice A. Billings.

There are two deeds by which William N. Nims acquired and later sold, conditionally, land on Deerfield Street, known as the Frank Russell place.

**Francis Nims Thompson**, son of Francis M. and Mary (Nims) Thompson, and great grandson of Hull Nims<sup>15</sup>, was born in Greenfield, Mass., in 1872. As a young lawyer he established a practice there. In 1899 he became Register of the Probate Court, following his father in that position, and in 1914, again following his father, he became Judge of the Probate Court. In 1915, he married Cora Ella Blake; the couple had one daughter. Judge Thompson was active in the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, and followed Jennie Arms Sheldon as president. He was also active in Greenfield town affairs. He died in 1948.

His papers consist of correspondence, mainly concerned with Nims family genealogy, and a folder of addresses and other papers he wrote, including one autobiographical note and numerous papers that relate to the Nims family. With the latter is one paper, written by his father, concerned with the New Hampshire Grants.

**Jeremiah Nims**<sup>6</sup> son of John<sup>2</sup> and Elizabeth (Hull) Nims, was born in Deerfield in 1721. A farmer and maltster, he lived on the old homestead, served as deacon of the town church and

was prominent in town affairs. In 1744 he married Mary Cooley of Sunderland, Mass. They had six children, one of whom is mentioned below. Jeremiah died in 1797, his widow in 1804.

His papers consist of three deeds to land he acquired in Deerfield, a sheriff's warrant in his favor against Samuel Williams, a copy of a letter he wrote (concerning tobacco inspectors) to Mass. Governor Bowdoin, and a copy of his will.

**Seth Nims**<sup>17</sup>, son of Jeremiah<sup>6</sup> and Mary (Cooley) Nims, was born in Deerfield in 1762. He lived on the old homestead, served in the Revolutionary War, and also against the insurgents in Shays' Rebellion. He was a deacon of the church and postmaster in the town. He married Electa Arms. Two of their children, and two of their grandchildren, are mentioned below. Seth died in 1831, his widow in 1843.

His papers include an incomplete copy of his 1788 commission as ensign; his 1797 commission as captain of militia; a number of deeds to land in Deerfield; a letter from David Hoyt, Jr., written in Boston in 1803, and a letter to Nims and Augustus Lyman written the same year by William Sullivan; a letter from Elihu Hoyt and E.H. Williams in 1808, and one from Elijah Williams in 1824; a survey by Edward Hitchcock in 1814; and a list of letters remaining in the post office the year of Nim's death.

**Lucinda Nims**, daughter of Seth<sup>17</sup> and Electa (Arms) Nims, was born in 1784 and died, unmarried, in 1857.

Her papers consist of an invitation to a ball in Erastus Barnard's Assembly Hall in Deerfield in 1803; deeds to land, including a deed from her father and a quitclaim to land formerly belonging to their father, from her brother Edwin; several drafts of a will in 1833; and a lease to her brother Edwin of land they held in common.

**Frank Nims**<sup>36</sup> son of Elijah<sup>31</sup> and Mary (Russell) Nims, and grandson of Seth Nims, was born in 1835. He farmed his entire life. In 1858 he married Mary Flemming of Northfield, Mass. They had one son and one daughter.

He is represented by two deeds to the same tract of land in Deerfield, which he received from his mother and later granted to his son Russell.

**Edwin Nims**<sup>32</sup>, son of Seth<sup>17</sup> and Electa (Arms) Nims, was born in Deerfield in 1791. He was a farmer and served as town clerk. His first wife was Eunice Kimberly of New Haven, Ct.; she died in 1840, and four years later he married Dirixa (Nims) Hawks, a daughter of Joel Nims<sup>25</sup>. Edwin died in 1852.

His papers consist of six writs of attachment for unpaid bills owing to him, a notice regarding the birth of his daughter, Eunice, in 1845, and two surveys (1860) to lands formerly owned by him.

**Eunice Kimberly (Nims) Brown**, daughter of Edwin<sup>32</sup> and Dirixa Nims, was born in 1845. In 1865 she married Rufus F. Brown. She lived for a number of years on the Nims homestead on Lot 27, and later in Springfield, Mass.

She is represented by one paper, her appointment in 1905 as trustee for the estate left by Lucinda Nims [see above]; it is signed by Francis Nims Thompson, Register of the Probate Court of Franklin County.

**Elihu Nims**, son of Asa<sup>18</sup> and Mary (Worthington) Nims, and grandson of David Nims<sup>7</sup>, was born in Shelburne, Mass., in 1783. He was married to Zilpha, daughter of William Long of Shelburne.

He is represented by one item, a license to distill spirits for a period of two weeks in May 1814.

**Daniel Nims**, son of Daniel<sup>7</sup> and Charity (Childs) Nims, was born in 1761. A resident of Colrain, Mass., he served in the Revolutionary War. He married Lydia \_\_\_\_\_ in 1780. The couple later moved to Bolton, New York, where Daniel died in 1855.

His papers consist of two promissory notes and three writs of attachment brought against him for defaulting on the notes.

**Ebenezer Nims**<sup>3</sup>, youngest son of Godfrey<sup>1</sup> and Mary (Miller) Nims, was born in Deerfield in 1687. He was captured in 1704 and taken to Canada, where he married Sarah Hoyt, also a captive. They were redeemed in 1714 and lived for a time in the Nims family homestead. Three of their five children are mentioned below. Ebenezer died in 1767, Sarah in 1761.

He is represented by one paper, a copy of his will (1756) as attested in 1909.

**David Nims**<sup>9</sup> son of Ebenezer<sup>3</sup> and Sarah (Hoyt) Nims, was born in 1716. He moved to Keene, NH, about 1740, where he was a tailor. In 1742, he married Abigail Hawks; the couple had eight children. David died in 1803, his wife in 1799.

He is represented by a photocopy of his bond to John Hawks (1738) from the original in the Historical Society of Cheshire County in Keene. (This is filed with the paper of his brother, Moses Nims<sup>10</sup>)

**Moses Nims**<sup>10</sup>, son of Ebenezer<sup>3</sup> and Sarah (Hoyt) Nims, was born in 1718, settled in the Mill River district of Deerfield. After the Revolutionary War, he moved to Conway, Mass. In 1748 he married Margaret (Allen) Hawks, who died in 1772.

A copy of his will (1791), attested in 1909, is included in the collection and is filed with the papers of his brother, David<sup>9</sup>.

**Ariel Nims**<sup>21</sup>, son of Moses<sup>10</sup> and Margaret (Allen) Nims, was born in 1751. In 1773, he married Anna Brewer of Sudbury, Ct., and in 1775 served as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. Two of the couple's seven children, Joel and Jehu, settled in Jefferson County, New York. Ariel died there at the home of his son, Jehu.

He is represented by a deed to land in Deerfield (1797), filed with papers of his nephews, Rufus and Elisha, and his great nephew, Ruel A. Nims.

**Rufus Nims**, son of Elisha<sup>20</sup> and Tama (Bardwell) Nims, and grandson of Moses Nims<sup>10</sup>, was born in 1785. In 1804 he married Cynthia Wright and the couple later settled in Adams, New York.

There are two of his papers, both deeds to land he purchased in Deerfield (1809). These are filed with the papers of his brother, Elisha<sup>33</sup>, his uncle Ariel<sup>21</sup>, and his nephew, Ruel A. Nims.

**Elisha Nims**<sup>33</sup>, youngest son of Elisha<sup>20</sup> and Tama (Bardwell) Nims, was born in 1790. He married Julia, daughter of Joseph Baldwin, and lived at Bloody Brook, now South Deerfield. One of the couple's sons is mentioned below. Elisha died in 1853.

He is represented by a deed to land in Deerfield which he sold to Eli Sanderson in 1815 (filed with those of his brother Rufus, his uncle Ariel, and his son Ruel A. Nims).

**Ruel A. Nims**, son of Elisha<sup>33</sup> and Julia (Baldwin) Nims was born in 1821. He married Mary Ann, daughter of Roswell Lanfair.

His papers consist of a mortgage deed to his land in the Wisdom section of Deerfield, ceded in 1862 to the Trustees of the Smith Charities (discharged in 1891), and two deeds to land in Deerfield which he purchased from Orson B. Jones (filed with the papers of his great-uncle Ariel<sup>21</sup>, his father, and his uncle Rufus).

**Amasa Nims**<sup>11</sup>, son of Ebenezer<sup>3</sup> and Sarah (Hoyt) Nims, was born in 1725. In 1751, he married Sarah, daughter of Samuel Allen of the Bars section of Deerfield; the couple had eight children. About 1765, the family moved to Greenfield, Mass., and Amasa died there about three years later.

An indenture by which Amasa and his wife Sarah agreed to accept Esther Cotes, daughter of Charles Cotes of Falltown, now Bernardston, Mass., as an apprentice and to provide for her and teach her common household work and to "Read Good English" is a part of the collection.

### **Container List**

<b>Box 1</b> Folder 1 Papers of Godfrey Nims <sup>1</sup> 1679-1694 and undated	(3 items)
Folder 2 Papers of Godfrey Nims <sup>1</sup> 1705-1709	(2 items)
Folder 3 Papers of John Nims <sup>2</sup> 1720-1746	(4 items)
Folder 4 Papers of John Nims <sup>4</sup> 1736-1769	(4 items)
Folder 5 Papers of Reuben Nims <sup>12</sup> 1771-1814	(7 items)
Folder 6 Papers of William Nims 1836	(1 item)
Folder 7 Papers of Samuel Nims <sup>24</sup> 1811, 1813	(2 items)
Folder 8 Papers of Joel Nims <sup>25</sup> 1817-1837	(5 items)
Folder 9 Papers of Ebenezer Nims 1767, 1773	(2 items)

Folder 10 Papers of Samuel P. Nims of Rowe 1804	(2 items)
Folder 11 Papers of Hull Nims <sup>15</sup> 1803-1821	(7 items)
Folder 12 Papers of William Newton Nims 1857, 1859	(2 items)
Folder 13 Papers of Francis Nims Thompson, correspondence, 1916-1939	(25 items)
Folder 14 Papers of Francis Nims Thompson, addresses, etc.	(31 items)
Folder 15 Papers of Jeremiah Nims <sup>6</sup> 1753-1786	(6 items)
Folder 16 Papers of Seth Nims <sup>17</sup> 1788-1831	(19 items)
Folder 17 Papers of Lucinda Nims 1803, 1829-1844	(11 items)
Folder 18 Papers of Frank Nims <sup>36</sup> 1885, 1887, 1891	(3 items)
Folder 19 Papers of Edwin Nims <sup>32</sup> 1819-1821, 1845, 1860	(9 items)
Folder 20 Papers of Eunice Kimberly (Nims) Brown 1905	(1 item)
Folder 21 Papers of Elihu Nims 1814	(1 item)
Folder 22 Papers of Daniel Nims 1788	(5 items)
Folder 23 Papers of Ebenezer Nims <sup>3</sup> and his son David <sup>9</sup> and Moses <sup>10</sup> 1756, 1738, 1791	(3 items)
Folder 24 Papers of Descendants of Moses Nims <sup>10</sup> , his son Ariel <sup>21</sup> , His grandsons Rufus and Elisha <sup>33</sup> , and his great grandson Ruel A. Nims 1797, 1809, 1815, 1862-1868	(7 items)
Folder 25 Papers of Amasa Nims <sup>11</sup> 1761	(1 item)

**Box 2** Records of the Nims Family Association and genealogical lists, as follows:

- Volume containing a brief history of the organization, 1904-1922; names of those present at reunions, 1922-1934; historian's papers; and vital statistics.
- Volume containing lists of those present at reunions, 1904-1921; historian's papers for the period; and vital statistics.
- Volume containing an account of the 1919 reunion and lists of those attending reunions from 1915-1923.
- Unbound letters to and directory of the Nims Family Association, 1933, 1979, 1980, 1981, and printed material including by-laws of the Association.
- Volume containing lists of the descendants of Ebenezer Nims (son of Godfrey), his sons Moses, Elisha and Amasa; and descendants of John Nims (son of Godfrey).

**Box 3** Genealogical material: descendants of David Nims (2 gatherings), Rufus Nims (1 gathering) and Ruel Nims (1 gathering)

**Box 4** Genealogical material

**Box 5** Genealogical material and miscellany:

- Descendants of Godfrey Nims (7 generations through his son, John)
- Descendants of Godfrey Nims (7 generations through his son, Ebenezer)
- Descendants of Godfrey Nims (7 generations through his daughter, Thankful)
- Descendants of Godfrey Nims (7 generations through his daughter, Abigail)
- Folder containing printed forms, many with typescripts of genealogical data
- List of individuals who might be interested in Nims genealogy

Correspondence relating to the Nims family: letters to and from Norman Nims of  
Yonkers, N.Y.; George and Jennie Arms Sheldon; and others, 1870-1979  
Typescript listing of the information in Sheldon's genealogical notes relating to  
the Nims family  
Miscellany: photographs and printed material

**Box 6** Addenda received from Mr. David Nims of Keene, N.H. in 1984:

Papers of Gilman Nims of Deerfield, later of Roxbury, N.H., 1836-1880;  
Accompanied by 2 papers of his wife Charlotte (one as executrix of her  
husband's estate; 1 paper of their son Albert G. Nims; and 4 items relating  
to church matters. Filed with these, an itemized list (not in the present  
order of the material) by Mr. David Nims (36 items in  
all)

Correspondence of the Nims Family Association

Letters to the Association, 1925, 1938 (2 items)

Letters to Leslie A. Nims, President, 1936, 1938 (2 items)

Letters to Walter Nims, Sec.-Treas., 1925-1938 (18 items)

Letters to and from Harold B. Nims, Sec.-Treas., 1948-1957 (16 items)

Filed with the above, an itemized list by David Nims

Miscellaneous minutes and records of the Nims Family Association, with listing  
by David Nims

Miscellany: one photograph and printed material with listing by David Nims