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Guide to the William Sherwood Papers

WA MSS S-1324



by Tina Evans

May 1991

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-1324

CREATOR: Sherwood, William

TITLE: William Sherwood papers

DATES: 1808–1906

BULK DATES: 1840–1880

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.25 linear feet (4 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, diaries, genealogical research materials and other papers concerning Sherwood's unsuccessful mining ventures in California and Australia, his journey to England 1846-48 to research the descendants of Joshua Jennings, and Sherwood family life.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.sherwood>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.sherwood>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchase from Carroll A. Means, 1958.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The William Sherwood Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

William Sherwood Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Scope and Contents

The William Sherwood Papers document the life of William Sherwood, judge and farmer of Southport, Connecticut, who mined for gold in California and Australia during the 1850s. The papers span the years 1808-1906, but the bulk of the material covers the years 1840-80.

The papers are arranged in two series. Series I, *Correspondence*, is housed in Box 1, folders 1-37, and is arranged chronologically. Series II, *Personal Papers* (Boxes 2-3, folders 38-75), concerns William Sherwood and the Sherwood family.

[Series I, *Correspondence*](#), spans the years 1809-80, but most letters were written in the years 1847-55 and 1878-80. Major correspondents are William Sherwood, his wife Esther, children Sarah Esther and William Couch Sherwood, and his cousin Uriah Sherwood of Fairfield. The letters for 1809-12 concern Uriah Sherwood's business affairs and shipping. There is then a gap in the correspondence until 1821 when Uriah receives a letter from William Sherwood discussing family matters. An 1853 letter, from Henry Sturges, to William Sherwood discusses trading and shipping in St. Croix and includes a copy of shipping regulations. Letters from the 1841-43 concern family matters.

In November 1846 William Sherwood, a descendant of Joshua Jennings, was appointed to a committee investigating the claims of Jennings's descendants to the estate of William Jennings, who died in England in 1798. In December 1847 Sherwood went to England to trace all the possible descendants of Joshua Jennings and to find a connection to William Jennings. His research includes notes on the Chauncey and Couch families. Letters to his wife detail his journey across the Atlantic, while a letter from fellow committee member Augustus Jennings to Sherwood concerns letters of introduction. Sherwood remained in England until May 1848 and his letters describe his frustration tracing family members and his travels in England.

In 1849 Sherwood decided to seek his fortune in the California gold fields. In March 1849 he received a letter from the War Department concerning the acquisition of arms and ammunition for his emigration to California. In February 1850 Sherwood left New York for Panama aboard the mailship *Cherokee*. Letters to his family chronicle the voyage and his journey across the Isthmus of Panama. Three letters describe Panama and his stay there. Sherwood reached San Francisco in April 1850 and went to Stockton, then Mariposa. Letters to his family describe the difficulties of mining, prices, the lack of suitable mining lots, relations with other miners, wolves, poor living conditions, his health, poor relations with Indians, and the settlement of cousin Uriah Sherwood's estate, they also contain advice concerning the Southport farm. Sherwood remained in California until the end of 1851, when lack of success forced him to return to Connecticut.

In 1853 Sherwood attempted to mine gold in Australia with two companions, Barlowe Hill and Edgar Pemoyer. Sherwood arrived in Melbourne in October, and his initial letters describe his preparation for the

expedition, including the purchase of equipment. Letters written during 1854 describe the difficulties of mining in Australia, frequent moves to find more lucrative sites, Sherwood's recurring ill health, and his poor financial state. Letters from his family contain family news and details concerning the family farm. Sherwood's lack of success forced him to return to the United States in January 1855, but he continued to correspond with Pemoyer and Hill until 1857.

After a gap in the correspondence, Sherwood began to write to his grandchildren, Clarence Bradley, Edward and William Frost, and Lizzie Whitehead in 1871. The majority of letters concern such matters as the settlement of an uncle's estate, homesteading by Bradley in Stockton, Kansas, farming, crops, and general family news.

[Series II, Personal Papers](#) (Boxes 2-3), are the personal papers of William Sherwood, plus a few papers from other family members. The section devoted to William Sherwood contains material relating to his genealogical research, including Sherwood's notes on the descendants of Joshua Jennings, call slips from the British Museum Reading Room, family trees for various branches of the family, and a record of Sherwood's expenses in England. Other material includes his appointments as commissioner (1846), probate judge (1846), and notary public (1871), as well as papers relating to his Australian mining venture, such as his license to mine gold, and account books of farm and household expenses for the years 1840-72. Sherwood also kept diaries for the years 1853-55. The diary pages, bound into *Middlebank's New England Almanac*, chronicle daily activities on the farm. If Sherwood maintained a diary during his expeditions in California and Australia, it has not survived with the collection. The printed Material includes a notice enticing European emigrants to Texas in 1848 and a broadside for the mailship *Cherokee*,

The diaries of Sarah Sherwood are found in Box 3, folders 70-72. The first diary, 1847-48, was kept by Sarah during her father's absence in England and contains details about the family farm, the weather, her activities, and those of her brother William Couch Sherwood. Later diaries containing similar details were bound into *Middlebanks New England Almanac*. Other material includes the will of Uriah Sherwood, papers relating to the estates of William C. Sherwood and William J. Sherwood, and financial papers of the Sherwood family.

[Oversize](#), Box 4, contains oversize correspondence, family trees, a copy of the *Republican Farmer-Extra*, ca. 1844, and a plan for an orchard on Sherwood property.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1809-80

0.5 linear feet (1 box)

Series I, *Correspondence*, consists of one box of chronologically arranged correspondence of William Sherwood and his family.

b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	1809
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1810
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1811-12
b. 1, f. 4	Correspondence	1821
b. 1, f. 5	Correspondence See also: Oversize, Box 4, Folder 75	1835-37
b. 1, f. 6	Correspondence	1841-43
b. 1, f. 7	Correspondence	1844-46
b. 1, f. 8	Correspondence	1847
b. 1, f. 9	Correspondence	1848-49
b. 1, f. 10-11	Correspondence	1850
b. 1, f. 12-14	Correspondence	1851
b. 1, f. 15	Correspondence	1852
b. 1, f. 16-17	Correspondence	1853
b. 1, f. 18-20	Correspondence See also: Oversize, Box 4, Folders 76-77	1854
b. 1, f. 21-22	Correspondence	1855
b. 1, f. 23	Correspondence	1857
b. 1, f. 24	Correspondence	1859
b. 1, f. 25	Correspondence	1871
b. 1, f. 26	Correspondence	1872
b. 1, f. 27	Correspondence	1873-75
b. 1, f. 28	Correspondence	1878
b. 1, f. 29-31	Correspondence	1879
b. 1, f. 32-36	Correspondence	1880
b. 1, f. 37	Envelopes	n.d.

Series II: Personal Papers, 1808-1906*0.75 linear feet (2 boxes)*

The materials in Series II, *Personal Papers*, are alphabetically arranged by subject or form. Other Sherwood family papers are placed at the end of the series.

	Australia	
b. 2, f. 38	Gold	1855
b. 2, f. 39	Memorandum book	1855
b. 2, f. 40	Receipts	1855
b. 2, f. 41	Business and calling cards	n.d.
b. 2, f. 42	Certificates of appointment See also: Oversize, Box 4, folder 78	1846, 1871
b. 2, f. 43-47	Diaries Bound with: <i>Middlebank's New England Almanac</i>	1853-55
	Genealogical research	
b. 2, f. 48	Chauncey family	n.d.
b. 2, f. 49-52	Couch family See also: Oversize, Box 4, folder 79	1846-47
	England	
b. 2, f. 53	British Museum Reading Room admission records	1848
b. 2, f. 54	Letterbook	1846-47
b. 2, f. 55	Notes	1846-47
b. 2, f. 56	Printed material	1847-48
b. 2, f. 57	Receipts	1847-48
b. 2, f. 58	Family trees See also: Oversize, Box 4, folder 80	n.d.
b. 2, f. 59	Jennings family	1846-47, n.d.
b. 2, f. 60	Research notes	1847, n.d.
b. 2, f. 61	Notebook	1851-1906
	Printed material	
b. 3, f. 62	Emigration to Texas. Peters' Grant. <i>Middlebank's New England Almanac</i> See: Box 2, Folders 41-42 and 48-52	1848 Jan 12
b. 3, f. 63	Miscellaneous	n.d.

Printed material (continued)

Republican Farmer-Extra[See: Oversize, Box 4, Folder 81](#)

b. 3, f. 64	U. S. Mailship <i>Cherokee</i>	ca. 1849
Other family papers		
Financial		
b. 3, f. 65-66	Account books	1840-72
b. 3, f. 67	Miscellaneous papers See also: Oversize, Box 4, folder 82	1823-80, n.d.
b. 3, f. 68	Receipts	1840-80
b. 3, f. 69	Miscellaneous	1832-35
"Plan of Young Orchard on the South Side Hill north of the house occupied by Sarah Hull and William Sherwood..." See: Oversize, Box 4, folder 83		
Sherwood, Sarah		
b. 3, f. 70	Diary	1847-48
b. 3, f. 71-72	Diaries Bound with: <i>Middlebank's New England Almanac</i>	1850-51
Sherwood, Uriah		
b. 3, f. 73	Papers	1808-20
Sherwood, William C.		
b. 3, f. 74	Estate	1872
Sherwood, William J.		
b. 3, f. 75	Estate	1847

Oversize, 1823-54*2 linear feet (1 box)*

Oversize contains material from Series I and II. The papers are arranged in series order.

	Correspondence	
b. 4, f. 76-77	Correspondence	1835, 1854
	Personal Papers	
b. 4, f. 78	Appointments	1846 May 2
	Genealogical research	
b. 4, f. 79	Couch family	n.d.
b. 4, f. 80	Family trees	1847, n.d.
	Printed material	
b. 4, f. 81	<i>Republican Farmer-Extra</i>	ca. 1844
	Other family papers	
b. 4, f. 82	Miscellaneous papers	1823 Oct 2
b. 4, f. 83	"Plan of the Young Orchard on the South Side Hill north of the house occupied by Sarah Hill and William Sherwood..."	1847 Jun 7

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Preferred Titles

Middlebank's New England Almanac

Subjects

Agriculture -- Kansas
Gold mines and mining -- Australia
Gold mines and mining -- California
Voyages to the Pacific coast

Geographic Names

Australia -- Gold discoveries
California -- Gold discoveries
Fairfield (Conn.) -- History
Kansas -- History
Mariposa (Calif.) -- History
Panama -- Description and travel
Stockton (Calif.) -- History

Genres / Formats

Diaries -- United States

Names

Bradley, Clarence
Frost, Edward
Hill, Barbara
Pemoyer, Edgar
Sherwood, Esther
Sherwood, Sarah Esther
Sherwood, Uriah, d. 1851
Sherwood, William
Sherwood, William Couch, d. 1872
Whitehead, Lizzie

Families

Chauncey family
Couch family
Jennings family
Sherwood family